

🗝 Necro Citizenship 🖗





DEATH, EROTICISM, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY UNITED STATES

Russ Castronovo

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AS IN ALL THINGS,

for Leslie

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Preface

At a public gathering of townspeople near the end of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne watches aloof, her face "like a mask; or rather, like the frozen calmness of a dead woman's features." Her imitation of death, the reader is told, stems from "the fact that Hester was actually dead."¹ On this day when the populace assembles to consecrate its governors, Hester appears as a walking corpse. Although Hester is not a zombie, for a moment, literal and figurative meanings of death blur so that her severe estrangement from the community tracks across both simile and statement of fact. This shadowy space of a public sphere where people's bodies and identities are transmogrified is the terrain that this book calls *necro citizenship*.

Hester is "actually dead," not because of some Poe-like erotic mesmerism that has slowed decomposition (though there will be plenty of that in later chapters) or because Nathaniel Hawthorne loses his precise grip on language, confusing actual and metaphoric sense. Instead, she is dead because of a political process, one that transpires in public and changes bodies at the level of their constitution. U.S. versions of democracy guide and oversee this process, binding persons to the state and nation on the condition that they first identify as citizens-or noncitizens-and become as placid and resigned as the "frozen calmness" of Hester's face. More often than not, rather than a relation of force, this binding is one of desire and eroticism. The United States, after all, loves its citizens much as the rituals of patriotism verify that these citizens love their country in return. This binding is also irresistible: citizens long for Hester's frozen calmness; their morbid affection for nation and state orchestrated in the public sphere connects to a fantasy of democracy that seems beyond the disruption, contestation, and unresolved agitation of politics. The promise of this sort of necro citizenship lies outside the scope of politics. The public sphere-and the forms of personhood that it creates-

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hinges on an ambivalent desire to find consummate political satisfaction in modes of participation and forms of civic identity that seek to finalize otherwise incomplete and often messy democratic endeavors as a *post*political achievement.

Hester's uncertain manifestation as a living corpse and the confusion it promotes between actuality and metaphor allude to a larger set of relations that suture citizens to the democratic nation-state. Even though the line between the literal and figurative is unsettled by the ghostly appearance of Hester at the fringes of the public sphere, it is redrawn as Hawthorne describes this gathering of citizens as "actual democracy." One seems to be on firm ground again; one knows what actual democracy means: direct participation, the equitable distribution of political power, collective decision making, and the open, candid display of governance and public administration. But this actual democracy soon becomes less real and more fantastic in ways that hollow out its material practices so that it is readily "adopted" (Hawthorne's word) into less egalitarian forms dating back to monarchical power.² Like the unclear boundary zone between life and death that Hester walks, actual democracy in "America"-the United Stateshas a tendency to cozy up to forms of governance that idealize an acquiescent and passive citizenry.

This book explores the dematerialization and spiritualization of democratic practices by examining moments when, in a reflection of Hester's face at a supposedly democratic assembly, it becomes hard to distinguish between actual and figurative death. But Necro Citizenship is not a book about Hawthorne (though The Blithedale Romance is important to chapter 3). Nor is it singularly a "literary" study in which other discourses of the occult, sexual behavior, and judicial review, for instance, appear simply as interestingly relevant cultural backdrops. Other "major" U.S. authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Frances E. W. Harper are discussed here, too, but their works are positioned amid a host of cultural producers who also had trouble distinguishing the actually dead from social corpses, and in turn, active political subjects from passive citizens. These cultural producers well up from regions of popular discourse within U.S. public spheres, and include antislavery activists who lovingly detailed the beauty of slave suicide, physiological reformers who saw white male sexual bodies as

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dangerously mortal, clairvoyants who contacted the dead, and newly enfranchised African Americans who spoke of a nation haunted by slavery. Despite significant differences in rhetoric and epistemology, a range of figures from celebrated teenage mediums who communicated with departed souls to early psychologists who claimed to have unlocked the "souls of black folk" all converged in linking questions of social death, the hauntings of memory, and disembodied citizens to the political forms of U.S. democracy. Citizenship is paramount among these forms, naturalizing the transformation of persons into official political entities as well as social corpses.

The citizen as social corpse seemingly has no history, no material debts to episodes of subjectivity that predate a morbid cathexis to legal personhood. This book would share in that amnesia were it not responsive to the lessons of a democratic pedagogy articulated by citizen-subjects who exposed the fault lines of necro citizenship. Such a postpolitical category takes reactive shape against an alarming recognition that social corpses, ghosts, passive citizens, and other moribund bodies can also exert an excessively vibrant and ungovernable materiality that resists spiritualization or stasis. The corpse may be dead, but it is nonetheless a body, one that recalls a life of social and political engagement. The citizen-subject often remembers the forgotten everyday practices, submerged cultural heritage, and nonnormative desires-all that is excluded under abstract, disembodied citizenship-that challenge a prevailing narrative of the most cherished political categories in the United States as inanimate and invulnerable to change. In the pages that follow, I look at insistently nongeneric bodies who serve as reminders that categories of freedom and abstract citizenship have material prehistories.

In broad terms, then, this book contends that U.S. citizenship has been a sadly ambivalent relation that produces political passivity along with vibrancy, social isolation along with community feeling. Although I refuse to diminish the importance of the democratic possibilities that reside within undervalued material aspects of citizenship, in writing this book and assembling its archive, I also found it impossible to ignore the mass of depoliticized persons and de-authorized memories that U.S. democracy creates. In telling its ambivalent story, *Necro Citizenship* tends to stress these darker effects. But for now, I

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would like to emphasize a more cheering story about the real community of persons whose support, insight, and dedication to friendship have enlivened both this project and me. Celia Lisset Alvarez, Peter Bellis, Jeanne Elders DeWaard, Tassie Gwilliam, Mike Hohmeyer, Catherine Judd, Michael Rothberg, John Paul Russo, Jeffery Shoulson, and Frank Stringfellow have patiently listened to my ideas and inspired me with their own. David Glimp has been a wonderful colleague; his willingness to engage questions of aesthetics and political theory energized this project at crucial stages. At the University of Miami, I have also received the generous support of a Max Orovitz Summer Research Award in 1996 and a General Research Support Award in 1998.

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Although they sometimes asked why I could not write a "true crime" or "legal thriller" best-seller that would bring untold riches and make their old age more comfortable, my parents, Mike Castronovo and Frances Abelson Castronovo, encouraged this book at every turn. Their unflagging support and dedication bespeaks a love that has sustained me for years. Julian Ty has enriched my life, and in the process,

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This book is dedicated to Leslie Bow. The thanks I owe Leslie for her intellectual companionship, humor, and warmth is only equaled by my love for her. With her, everything; without her, I shudder to think. This page intentionally left blank

DEMOCRACY'S GRAVEYARD

How does death structure political life? Ever since Patrick Henry issued his revolutionary ultimatum of "liberty or death," death has seemed pivotal to citizenship in the United States. While this choice appears clear-cut and transparent, the implied equivalence of political category to biological event constitutes a complex narrative of citizenship. What are the historical conditions that give freedom a natural, inescapable teleology? How does the ultimate privacy and incommunicability of death spell out a pedagogy for the public sphere? Why is the universal fact of mortality indispensable to specific constructions of citizenship in the United States? And what exactly is killed off by the experience of citizenship? In taking up such conflicting questions, *Necro Citizenship* examines the cultural force of death in order to historicize and theorize the brief life of the U.S. citizen.

Rituals of mourning, occult séances to summon the dead, eroticized memories of the deceased, the fetishization of suicide, and spiritualist beliefs in the afterlife that appeared in the nineteenth century are more than attempts to understand and accept the universal inevitability of mortality. Such practices and performances also exert specific political meanings by ambivalently marking the conditions of democratic existence within the state. Especially in conjunction with metaphoric yet no less real dimensions of slavery's social death, citizenship in the nineteenth-century United States at once stands in opposition to and depends on death for definition and substance. As both corporeal fact and political metaphor, death produces bodies whose materiality disturbs the impersonality of citizenship, but whose remove from sociopolitical life also idealizes the unhistorical and abstract nature of state identity. Death, then, structures political life in terms of aversion as well as desire.

When Walt Whitman heralded the United States in 1855 as "essentially the greatest poem," he took care to observe that "not a day passes ... not a minute or second without a corpse." He sought to ensure that the dead remain integrated in the poetic life of the nation: "They are palpable as the living are palpable."¹ Reluctant to exclude any bodies from the body politic, Whitman intuits deep connections between the dead and political community, between disembodiment and citizenship. William Cullen Bryant's schoolroom standard of 1821, "Thanatopsis," similarly rejects notions of a final estrangement by locating the corpse amid rituals of fellowship and incorporation:

> Yet not to thy eternal resting place Shalt thou retire alone ... the dead are there And millions in those solitudes.

While literary history casts Bryant as a student of British "graveyard poets" who inched beyond his teachers, his morbid meditation about a ghostly, disembodied polity was spurred by tensions of racial embodiment specific to the United States—what might be thought of as graveyard politics. "Thanatopsis" concludes by contrasting a democratic communion found in death with the isolation of the socially dead person, with "the quarry-slave at night" who returns to a cell without human companionship.² The slave's appearance is a familiar scene in graveyard politics much as is the entry of death into thoughts of liberty. Equally conventional associations between death and politics emerge in liberal moves to represent the U.S. state as a vampiric threat to freedom. The obedient citizen "bleeds to an everlasting death," charged Henry David Thoreau of a governmental system that does political injury to conscience and causes "a man's real manhood and immortality [to] flow out." ³ What is unconventional in Thoreau's critique, however, is the lurking suspicion that white male immortality-the belief in the citizen's body as immune to political injury-visits mortal consequences on subjects as well as slaves. At this point where natural biological event serves as political metaphor, death opens up into social death and the corpse's final estrangement from the living marks the effects of citizenship on the subjects it recognizes.

This tally of dead bodies is intended as more than so much thematic evidence linking death to political life. Dead bodies also imply a type of democratic subject produced in the nineteenth-century U.S. public sphere. Guaranteed formal equality and cultural autonomy, the citizen encounters politics as a near-death experience: he or she thus prefers privacy to public life, passivity to active engagement, and forgetting to memory. Citizenship is not merely an abstract relation or a generic cultural placeholder of identity, however. It is also a material process that recognizes specific bodies as well as formal persons, adapting both to broad parameters of inclusion and exclusion. By virtue of *corpus* meaning "body," the rights of citizenship, rituals of the public sphere, rites of remembrance, and freedom associated with incorporation into political community vitally concern corpses and death. Fastened to the corpse and body politic are also darker patterns of discorporation such as dispossession, privatization, amnesia, and unfreedom. And while buried within corpus lies the corpse, as when Virgil speaks of the shades of the dead, the word also bears strong associations to the living body in ways that suggest practices and memories that still quicken human subjects though they may be both incorporated and discorporated by necro citizenship.

Commitment to public debate, an insistence on grappling with material conditions, a refusal to absorb embodied differences under consensus, and other legacies of radical democratic action lie within U.S. citizenship. These stirrings fade when citizenship is reduced to a formal game where the stakes of recognition and exclusion are as absolute and final as death. But at the edges of legal incorporation and political dispossession, the dead walk, too: citizens are reanimated by republican, feminist, and Africanist senses of subjectivity that materialize in the seams of abstract personhood. If, as Jean Leca asserts, "the citizenship of the democratic nation-state seems to solicit the smoothing out . . . and the suppression" of "social cleavages," then *Necro Citizenship* looks at bodies and subjects who exercise histories that work to the opposite effect, making the political a bumpy terrain of contestation.⁴ Not all subjects lie still in democracy's graveyard.

At first glance, death and citizenship rarely coincide since representative government does not count the dead among its constituents. The departed neither vote nor pay taxes, and save for monumental cases such as the AIDS quilt or Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Wash-

ington, D.C., they do not participate in a public sphere.⁵ On closer inspection, however, the final release from embodiment plays a resonant role in the national imagination by suggesting an existence, posthumous as well as posthistorical, that falls outside standard registers of the political. Dying remains shrouded by the privacy of the survivors' grief and severe dissociation from the community of the living. But at a more transcendent level, the afterlife emancipates souls from passionate debates, everyday engagements, and earthly affairs that animate the political field. It is precisely such privatization and disengagement that stamps citizenship in the United States of the nineteenth century. To explain the effects of this morbid political logic, I turn to both institutional and popular arenas where death and citizenship existed in metaphoric relation. The social death of slavery, phobic concern for sexual purity, protopsychological research of mesmerism, séances and clairvoyants of spiritualism, postbellum naturalization of blacks, juridical circumscription of rights-all these cultural echoes of mortality and impressions of the afterlife prepare subjects to live as citizens of the nation-state. Necro Citizenship contends that abstract citizenship exploits the literal biological fact of mortality to effect a political death in which subjects alternately suffer and enjoy the depoliticization of cultural memories and social textures that reside in human life.

The U.S. democratic state loves its citizens as passive subjects, unresponsive to political issues, unmoved by social stimuli, and unaroused by enduring injustices. The abstract parameters of citizenship are in this way entangled with less formal yet equally strong cultural, emotional, and psychological investments that legitimate and even idealize acquiescence and impassivity. These investments amount to a sort of political necrophilia that fuels fascination with a citizenry immune to public commotion and insensible to contestatory energy. For two reasons, though, it would be a rush to judgment to single out and charge the U.S. democratic state alone with producing such morbid and depoliticizing fantasies. First, citizens themselves frequently cultivate a demeanor and subjectivity that releases them from the contingencies and insistent needs of embodied existence. The formal legal identity guaranteed by citizenship offers a key refuge that proves attractive to persons burdened with particularity. Even counterpublic spheres that resist the terms of state incorporation deploy codes of belonging hos-

tile to lived bodily difference. Second, citizens (though perhaps not as often) frustrate their own and the state's necrophilic attachments by responding to and critiquing the hierarchies that would demand their acquiescence to a depoliticized freedom. Under these complex terms, necro citizenship describes how disembodiment empties political identity of specificity even as it hints at the indisputable materiality of bodies that refuse abstraction.

Whitman's insistence on this materiality, his belief that the dead are "palpable" and continue to have emotional, social, and symbolic significance for the living, has been shared by a host of subsequent commentators. Foremost among these is Philippe Ariès, who starts with the classical period to chart death's changing thematics across two millennia. He discusses, for instance, how the importance of death branches out, first promoting an increased awareness of self and later becoming "a public phenomenon involving the whole community." Especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, corpses and graves accrue psychological and cultural meaning from what Ariès identifies as the "union of Eros and Thanatos." For cultures that fear death, such necrophilia promotes fascination with and helps tame an unknowable terror. The overdetermined union of sexuality and death goes a long way in explaining how at sentimental, familial, ritualistic, and communal levels, U.S. cultures engaged in concrete practices that fetishized corpses, mortality, and the afterlife. But Ariès's materially specific attention to a "macabre eroticism," given its different concerns, stops short of fleshing out the significance of death in structuring notions of freedom, democratic power, and social justice.⁶ This structural relationship defines the psycho-civic parameters and sexualpolitical territories of national belonging as necro citizenship.

In contrast to Ariès, critics of literary and cultural studies in the United States have highlighted political questions, particularly with regard to race and gender, but have not always kept an eye on the material and discursive forces that produce race and gender (as well as sexuality and class) as conflictual sources of political subjectification rather than uncontested categories of identity. It is not enough to politicize identity, as Wendy Brown argues, because a radical democratic project must ask how political identities themselves are "also potentially reiterative of regulatory, disciplinary society in its configuration of a disciplinary subject."⁷ A focus on death, I suggest, is one

way to ensure that the material and discursive constituents of political identities are not overlooked. So often productive of unsublimated materiality *and* rigid disciplinary subjects, death prevents discussion of politics as either episodic or independent of culture's nitty-gritty everydayness. The hermeneutic I employ thus counters the famous antimaterialist polemic of Ralph Waldo Emerson, shared by many subsequent cultural critics, who asked, "Why should we grope among the dry bones of the past?"⁸ My fusing of death, politics, and the erotic encourages an investigation that recuperates the palpable lifeblood of politics—that is, bodies subjected to ideologies of slavery, legal personhood, or liberal universalism. "The cosmology of American political life," comments Gary Laderman, "is saturated with death and the bones of the dead."⁹

Still, political life does not just emerge out of thin air. It transpires within forms prescribed by the state to the effect that formal citizenship adjusts subjectivity to fit nationalist imperatives. Attributes of subjectivity that spill over the cookie-cutter shape of state identity are trimmed away as so much excess. Collective countermemory, gender differentiation, and racial embodiment—in short, all the residues that threaten to make a mess of the historically and materially bland recipe for the citizen-are discounted as private, restrictively idiosyncratic, and politically incalculable. Experiences and recollections that flow outside of national citizenship nonetheless become the object of an aggressive national desire in its necrophilic will to equalize citizens as quiescent bodies beyond the sensuous touches of historical material existence. Citizenship is a state technology that kills nonnational cravings for more complexly lived subjects. The death of nonnational possibilities satiates the state's political longing for people dressed up in the unremarkable off-the-rack garb of generic personhood. But it does not follow that specific racial, gender, economic, and sexual identities are somehow free of regulation. As Wendy Brown inquires, "Given what produced it, given what shapes and suffuses it, what does politicized identity want?" ¹⁰ In its assertions that death structures U.S. national identity, this project contends that the question "What does citizenship demand?" incites a necrophilic desire to put democratic unpredictability and spontaneity to death.

This political necrophilia reveals the mortal underside of the social contract by which, as the fiction goes, human beings exchanged "natu-

ral" unfettered existence for the protective order of state citizenship. Chapters 1 and 2 explore the U.S. social contract in its more murderous and alienating forms, yet for now I want to concentrate on the contractarian logic that absorbs politics into the jurisdiction of the nation-state. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is ideal for this task, not simply because political theorists in the United States have for over two centuries framed their observations both within and against Rousseau's claims, but because his Social Contract (1762) repeatedly depicts the state as a natural body that eventually dies. While Rousseau wishes to prolong political life, this commitment entails sacrifices in the quality of that life. Describing the optimum workings of the social contract, Rousseau stresses that citizens do best to minimize their associations with one another. He holds out the state as a surrogate provider of community and kinship in compensation for this estrangement from collective attachments. Forget other forms of politics that emerge out of noninstitutional dialogue or irregular discussion, says the citizen and political theorist of Geneva. The suturing of political subjectivity to the state is satisfying enough to obviate the need for other affiliations. By conceptualizing citizenship as an apparatus that makes "each citizen . . . completely independent of all others and extremely dependent on the state," Rousseau sets the conditions for a body politic founded on stability, law, and the discipline of moral freedom. Even though he acknowledges that "the body politic, like a man's body, begins dying as soon as it is born," Rousseau hopes to suspend the inevitable process of political decay by placing sociopolitical matters in stasis.¹¹ Via the contractual structure of citizenship, the state preserves the body politic by rescuing bodies from politics. The social contract, in other words, immobilizes the radically contingent nature of political life by channeling subjects onto pathways regulated by sovereign power. Chantal Mouffe takes a dim view of such a "belief that a final resolution of conflicts is possible" because this attitude exhibits only contempt for the necessarily antagonistic arena of democratic projects.¹² Mouffe exposes the irony of Rousseau's position: the "final resolution" that slows down the state's decomposition is a deathly politics committed to inactivity and quiescence. What wards off the decay of the body politic is an ideology of citizenship that prefers the immobile and abstract identity of state citizen over the dynamic condition of materially specific historical subjects.

State and citizen are mediated by necrophilic conjunctions of aversion and desire: fear of the dissolution or death of the state creates the longing for an inactive, forever tranquil citizenry; meanwhile, the continued stable existence of government requires historically dead subjects. The metaphor of death has exerted real pressures in falsely idealizing passivity and disconnection as democratic virtues. These pages interrogate how illusions of abstract personhood, disavowals of national racial contradictions, fantasies of the public sphere, and posthistorical ideals encouraged living bodies to behave politically as dead citizens. This pursuit runs across a range of materials—such as novels, medical drawings, physiological tracts, the "science" of animal magnetism, popular beliefs in clairvoyance and other occult phenomena, antislavery poetry, slave narratives, and Supreme Court decisionsto document a pervasive contempt for embodiment and materiality that produced subjects as citizens of the nation-state. All these texts and artifacts manifest hostility to lived bodily histories because it is this sensuous residuum that troubles the vagueness of generic personhood. U.S. political identity privileges death as a means of deeming trauma, collective memory, racial heritage, and socioeconomic condition as inconsequential to democratic selfhood. Along well-beaten rhetorical pathways first cleared by Patrick Henry, death negates the human actor's embodied cultural density and palpable historical existence in articulation of the state citizen as an abstract body vested with liberty.

Yet citizenship can be seen as more than a state technology that narrows subjects to mere shadows of once embodied and engaged persons. Citizenship also presents possibilities that enliven people as political actors concerned with public welfare and civic liberty. Under a republican conception of citizenship, the body politic draws life from the commitment of persons to a public sphere characterized by open debate and virtuous action. It is the "virtuous citizen," according to Niccolò Machiavelli, who gives "life and vigor" to otherwise lifeless political forms. Like Rousseau, who compares the state to a natural body that will never escape its mortality, Machiavelli also likens the republic to a body. For Machiavelli, by contrast, this body can be kept alive only if "the heart and vital parts . . . [are] protected and defended, and not the extremities, for without the latter life is possible, but without the former death is certain."¹³ The heart of the republic

is the people: a state can do without administrative apparatuses and other appendages, but without a vibrant sense of positive freedom, it is sapped of its strength and becomes vulnerable to despotism or conquest. In public spheres where individuals were theoretically able to repress private self-interest, the English colonies in America (and later the United States) might be said to have experienced a "Machiavellian moment" when a republican pedagogy charged citizens with a felt sense of obligation to ensure the survival of civic liberty in a world prone to tyranny and economic alienation.¹⁴

In U.S. contexts, however, a body politic animated by republicanism ran the risk of overexcitement and dangerous stimulation. By conjoining Emerson's antislavery activist and the somatic citizen of hygienic reform, chapter 2 argues that once-expansive notions of public political virtue were constricted to physiological principles of politeness and private habit. While the ideological heritage of civic republicanism mounted a challenge to the inert, bodiless, and ultimately depoliticized forms of necro citizenship, the Atlantic world witnessed traffic other than the migration of Machiavellian thought. African bodies and Africanist memories were dislocated by the brutal enterprise of making a socially dead population. As they took root in the New World, black beliefs about ghosts, spirit possession, lost family members, and haunted selves disputed a democratic order that normalized citizenship as a culturally thin and depthless performance admitting neither materiality nor memory. The effects were twofold: by routing all political and social experience under an abstract category-that is, by holding citizenship as the singular teleology of a variegated cultural life-bodies encumbered by history and particularity were denied rights; meanwhile, in order to qualify for incorporation, "free" subjects consented to the repression of all associations, past and present, that lay outside their formal relations with the state. Several chapters of this study explore how cultural strategies practiced by Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and Frances E. W. Harper contested national public spheres that validated identity only in terms of its negative capacity to fall off the political map as generic, intensely private, and beyond the specificity of embodiment.

In a similar tactic, these pages turn to women like Hawthorne's Zenobia who projected nonideal accounts of citizenship, accounts that sought, quite literally, to arouse mesmerized women and other

somnolent subjects to a sense of political critique. It is thus not only classical republicans and their inheritors who pump liberty through the body politic. The literally and socially dead-including both drowned women such as Zenobia and legal nonentities like the "tragic mulattas" whose narrative fate is sealed - refuse to remain dead, and instead return to haunt the public sphere. No matter how far removed from abstract personhood and rational disinterest these unruly bodies are, their undeniable presence fills the cracks in the contradictions of belonging to the U.S. nation-state. The deathly logic of citizenship that sentenced women and slaves to excessive and lethal embodiment also conceives these subjects as bodies who necessarily reanimate the lifeless citizen, hinting that his abstract identity and legal authority always rests on memories, corporeal residues, and other material contexts, no matter how completely disavowed or forgotten they seem. The political necrophilia that loves to kill off gender and ancestry in the pursuit of spiritual being and generic personhood strangely revivifies such particularity in its obsessive fear of embodiment. Citizenship emerges as a deeply contradictory category: its legitimation of abstract, privileged, and empowered personhood depends on people whose untranscendent lives also make claims to freedom and dignity by contesting the very desirability of citizenship in the first place.

Necro Citizenship recognizes that the morbid political ideology of the United States is not without contestation, nor is this contestation restricted to a typical republican heritage.¹⁵ Even as they approached the promises of political membership as well as the twin effects of incorporation and discorporation with a mixture of attraction and dread, writers and activists from Hawthorne and Jacobs to Douglass and Harper suggest how corpses, ghosts, suicides, and socially dead persons like slaves exert recalcitrant materialities that confound the story of citizenship as a completed category beyond politics. They ask not only who gets to be a citizen but also interrogate the logic of citizenship itself, opening up this by-and-large-uncontested category to questions that defamiliarize cherished assumptions about belonging, membership, and personhood. It is not only that death-understood variously as dis/embodied experience, social position, and political metaphor-stultifies the lives of citizens. Death is also an undeniably historical event whose tangible consequences cannot be forever

ignored. In the face of the corpse's particularity, abstract personhood is threatened with desublimation; in the unearthing of citizenship's material prehistory, liberal accounts of individual freedom and completed emancipations do not seem as uncomplicated, progressive, or transcendent as they once did.

Such "dead-body politics," to invoke Katherine Verdery's account of actual and symbolic exhumations in the former socialist bloc, have revisionary potential. Still, while dead bodies can release an oppositional animus, perhaps even leading to the conclusion that "a newly meaningful universe" arises out of "posthumous political life," as Verdery suggests, we should not underestimate the state's protean capacity to circumscribe revisionary meaning, especially in U.S. contexts where politics takes the disciplinary form of citizenship.¹⁶ According to Lauren Berlant, citizenship itself has become a dead category after the fallout from the Reaganite privatization of politics.¹⁷ Čitizens are trapped within "the stale mausoleum of American constitutional thought," observes Daniel Lazare, such that sanctimonious political worship of an antiquated formalism forestalls more radical democratic possibilities, which might wrest governance away from the law and return it to the people.¹⁸ Such anemic thinking has long enervated democratic possibility, making the United States, in the words of Julia Stern, a "metaphorical crypt peopled by those Americans whose futures have been foreclosed by the incomplete promises of the Founding." ¹⁹ The appeals of political theorists such as William Connolly to "revivify democracy" and Claude Lefort to understand freedom as "the art of restoring life to the social body" second Berlant, Stern, and Lazare's insights that public discourses committed to combating discrimination, inequality, and abjection have become moribund.²⁰ But Berlant stops short of performing the last rites for democratic politics in the late-twentieth-century United States. Against dead citizenship, she explores possibilities of "a live social scene that exudes sparks, has practical consequences, forces better ways of thinking about nationality, culture, politics, and personhood."²¹ In focusing on moments and discourses in the nineteenth century when state identity and formalistic freedom deadened complex sociopolitical lives, I am seeking possibilities of telling a different story for a future where political subjects might be active and alive. Necro Citizenship

historicizes and theorizes the contradictions by which death comes to structure the lives of citizens in hopes of opening up identities to radical democratic contestation.

Ideology and Eternity

Dead-body politics may pack oppositional materiality, but death assumes larger ideological meanings that outstrip particularity and memory as well. The process is one in which discorporation prepares the way for incorporation: by annihilating corporeal specificity (for example, lived attributes of sexuality, race, or economic necessity), death recognizes no distinctions of birth or status so as to admit all into the province of the afterlife. As consolation for an inegalitarian social world, such necro ideology promises a final reckoning that levels out the differences between men and women, enslaved and free, rich and poor. Equalization takes the place of equality. Earthly decay is not just a biological event: it is also an ideological operation that overcomes cultural meanings invested in particular bodies. Death gives subjects a posthumous existence that is posthistorical to the extent that the material conditions that produce political difference, alienation, and unfreedom fail to signify.²² Necro ideology secures the body's passage from political life to afterlife, quite literally a region after history where temporality, substance, and change no longer matter.

By necro ideology, I mean to suggest something more than a recognition that death has ideological dimensions. I want to argue the inverse, too: namely, that ideology is an operation of fatal consequence to history. Not only does death have ideological significance but it is also the case that ideology is deathly, establishing a dominant understanding of reality that naturalizes as timeless the sociopolitical world it has historically produced. Ideology strips events, discourses, and social structures of historical specificity, presenting their norms and usages as the perpetual order of things. As a result, hierarchies, unequal material relations, and methods of subjection appear beyond history, as natural arrangements that continue without change. Still, *natural* is not quite the right word here since *nature* does not necessarily indicate an arrangement impervious to modification over time. Better yet is Louis Althusser's account of ideology as *eternal*, as an immutable reality that seems beyond the sensuous touch of living history. Like death, ideology appears as an inevitability that cannot be avoided and knows no other form. Just as all biological life eventually ends in death, under ideology, all historical events lead to but one course: the prevailing set of hierarchies. To assert, then, as Althusser does, that "ideology has no history," does not mean that ideology is mere fantasy but rather that it is a reality whose timelessness protects it from historical interpretation, interrogation, or revision.²³ Stuart Hall captures the antihistorical imperative guiding ideology in describing "the eternalization of relations which are in fact historically specific." 24 As a set of deathly effects specific to the nineteenth-century United States, necro ideology eternalizes sociohistorical relations as neither social nor historical by conceptualizing the unmarked soul as refuge from the politicized body, idealizing the afterlife as a perfected social order, and representing passivity and somnolence as democratic virtues.

Both Althusser and Hall build their insights on passages in "The German Ideology" where Marx unlocks the deadening effects of ideology on historical consciousness. Transcendent narratives of history install an absolute consciousness that fixes history into an immobile, everlasting pattern. Yet a counternarrative inheres in analytic practices that are responsive to sensuous human activities and material conditions. Ideology may eternalize an order that is in fact historically specific, but as a specific site of cultural production, necro ideology in the United States also creates a deathly public sphere where contestation can occur. Freedom, privacy, autonomy, and other political values made timeless by ideology are nevertheless historicized by the socially dead bodies and politically lifeless citizens that arise from necro ideology. This materialist counternarrative desublimates abstract renditions of personhood and nation, spelling out instead what Marx calls "the putrescence of the absolute spirit" — that is, the decay of an ideological consciousness that falsely transcends the palpable matter of human life as so many "phantoms." 25 The phantasmatic subject, drawn away from a live social scene and cathected to a ceaseless hierarchical order, is sustained by an apparatus of citizenship, its sublime orbit fixed by the gravity of death. But things can slip out of orbit. The desire for dead citizens and other phantoms is fueled by an equally intense aversion to embodied historical actors. Necrophilia suggests

the affective relation where such desire and aversion become, in part, indistinguishable, revealing an idealized and abstract public sphere as the burial ground of politically vibrant subjects.

For Marx, ideology makes history into a "caput mortuum"-literally, a "dead head" that is full of abstract ideas about great epochal tendencies in religion, morality, or metaphysics. This caput mortuum is disconnected from a body of sensuous experience and material activity. Under such airy conditions, history comes to a standstill. Reality undoubtedly continues apace, but history, as a narrative that (mis)represents reality, ceases to unfold because modes of production, social arrangements, and political knowledge are not part of the story. It is thus that Marx perceives that ideology has no history, intensifying his cadaverous imagery to explain ideology as an operation that places human beings and their material conditions in "fantastic isolation and rigidity" to the point of becoming "dead facts." 26 But these dead facts are productive. Necrophilia "politically deactivates as it affectively charges," as Dana Nelson contends, by subjecting democratic potential to a morbid sentimentality that reshapes that potential as hierarchy.²⁷ Necro ideology, then, not only annihilates historical consciousness, thereby immobilizing possibilities for political change; it also generates entities clumped about the nation-state who leave in their wake social corpses who refuse to transcend the inescapable effects of embodiment.

The five chapters in this book examine how necro ideology shaped and depoliticized nineteenth-century public spheres in relation to various, often loosely organized and democratically inspired, social, political, and hygienic crusades from antislavery activism and mesmerism to spiritualism and constitutional reform. In each, necro ideology takes what would be the irredeemable specificity of (social and political) death—for instance, the slave's corpse, the female medium's unexcitable body, or the sexual subject's psychological proximity to slavery—as a token of the freedom and independence acquired via citizenship's sublimation of material conditions and historical existence. As a way of organizing my understandings of the public sphere and citizenship, necro ideology allows for interpretations beyond thematic readings of death by drawing attention to knowledges and discourses that produce dead citizens. That is, necro ideology offers a

point of intervention in a public sphere that fears radically democratic and contestatory politics as overly vibrant and animated.

Under political necrophilia, antislavery representations lovingly equate slave suicide to an emancipatory release from embodiment. As it touched the slave's body, death repressed the corporeality that barred the slave from abstract rights. Here lies the ecstasy of death: the body's demise places the citizen beyond repressive forms of embodiment. The social contract pivots on this macabre logic by disposing of bodies that threaten the blandness of generic personhood. Ending with a reading of Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*, chapter 1 dissociates citizenship from a ghastly political rhetoric in order to propose freedom as contingent on life in the historical world.

Within phobic discourses about the living body's flows and seepages, concern over the "seminal excess" of white men displaces that for black bodies sentenced to social death. Chapter 2 extends Philippe Ariès's statement that "one cannot help being struck by the parallels between eighteenth-century medical views on apparent death and on masturbation" by describing a straight national pathology that compulsively dwells on white males.²⁸ As sexual conduct books proscribed the parameters of antislavery reform, white men become libidinally bound to castigated representations of blackness, their political outlook contracted to a physiological horizon. This mortal embodiment of cultural critique—a notable effect of Emerson's early essays—impoverishes political discourse, rendering it a matter of proclivity rather than a question of systemic injustice.

The next two chapters look at how mesmerism, spiritual mediumship, and the occult imagined a world of departed souls that influenced the here and now, particularly in the ways men and women idealized passivity and quietude as hallmarks of citizenship. In chapter 3, "medical" research into animal magnetism, hypnotists' confessions, and erotic novels about clairvoyance portray the young female medium as cold and corpselike, her spirit trance a state of delicious repose that defies all attempts at arousal. The medium who imitates death is politically erotic, bearing a privacy invulnerable to the burdens of the past and clamors of the present. Chapter 4 further explores this occult public sphere where morbidly sentimental interests in ghosts and spirit rapping overshadowed and interiorized the his-

tory of social death in the Americas. Charles Poyen, who fresh from a visit to Caribbean sugar plantations exported vodoun back to New England as "animal magnetism," popularized the unconscious as the site of utopian equality. This confusion of psychological and civic life spiritualizes discourses concerned with freeing bodies and souls from earthly bondage. Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* seeks to untangle this skewed emancipatory rhetoric by rematerializing slaves denied historical presence.

In the final chapter, the U.S. Supreme Court's juridical invention of privacy and formalization of national citizenship collide with Frances E. W. Harper's literary inventions, especially *Iola Leroy.* The post-Civil War rebirth of a national public subject, I argue, is founded on notions of sexual privacy. But the debates waged in legal opinions, black periodicals, and post-Reconstruction novels also suggest that the birth of citizenship spells out a type of death by annihilating all cultural history and family trauma that precedes the appearance of a formal national subject. After the trauma of fratricidal civil war, definitions of citizenship limit personhood to the thinness of the present. This chapter attends to those who mourn the loss of memories and persons disavowed by citizenship.

Bodies Politic

Death, in this book, is also an end to a means—namely, the investigation of the rhetorical and representational processes through which bodies become citizens. If citizenship functions as an abstract proposition that invokes a generalizable subject, what is the political status of specific corporeal traits, habits, and desires? Even as the broad legal parameters of citizenship promote democratic incorporation, this very inclusiveness produces discorporation by encouraging a posthumous and posthistorical perspective that construes distinct elements of subjects' cultural and corporeal biographies as roadblocks to full-fledged membership in the U.S. nation-state. Nancy Fraser labels this process a "bracketing" that downplays signs of social inequality so as to uphold the fantasy of a "space of zero-degree culture, so utterly bereft of any specific ethos as to accommodate with perfect neutrality and equal ease interventions expressive of any and every cultural ethos." This

fantasy is by no means harmless: "Such bracketing usually works to the advantage of dominant groups in society and to the disadvantage of subordinates" by deeming markings of historical difference and evidence of material inequality as nonpolitical, too private or particular to show up on the radar of formal personhood.²⁹ This book seeks to collapse these brackets by revealing such putatively nonpolitical categories as citizenship and postpolitical spaces of the public sphere as deeply political, fissured by social cleavages, historical gaps, and ideological contradictions.

By focusing on the body, this project historicizes the assumptions of citizenship, revealing U.S. political identity as an artifact built on the repression of nonpolitical elements of subjectivity. Yet attention to the "body" tends to reinscribe patterns of abstraction by invoking the "body" generally as though it were natural and universal. It is for this reason that I examine specific forms of corporeality and cultural embodiment that momentarily threaten ascription to the abstract identity of state citizen. The laboring body, licentious body, mesmerized body, emancipated slave body, and corpse all possess (and are possessed by) senses of historicity that under the right conditions, can add particularistic and hence disruptive doses of memory and difference to both the nation-state and public sphere. In contrast to these specific bodies, the trope of the body politic structurally depends on a metaphoric insubstantial body that could be deployed against actual episodes of embodied existence. This virtue of disembodiment romanticizes the liberal fantasy of a real and subversive body neither compromised nor constituted by discourse, representation, and epistemology.³⁰ Abstract personhood is rhetorically, if not actually, financed by the experiences, memories, and stories of others; the privileges of (white male) citizenship are tied up with the hyperembodiment of blacks, women, and workers. Necro citizenship assails not just the "body": it is a pattern of effects directed against specific bodies, a logic of incorporation and discorporation hostile to some historical bodies, but also erotically bound to the rigidity and corporeality of others. This tension suggests the ambivalent bodies-metaphoric yet actual, dead yet living, eternal yet decaying-that typify a U.S. citizenry.

In its often awkward and tense coordination around such doubleness, the liberal disembodiment crucial to citizenship does not stand

free and clear but has some specific debts to pay. Construed as impediments to abstract personhood, bodies overcome by cultural stimulus and abjected by institutions implode the fantasy of a "space of zero-degree culture." To return to the wisdom of the social contract, particularistic claims thwart the smooth functioning of the general will. Justice and equality have to be rethought, perhaps even redistributed, when their abstract assertions brush up against political bodies whose needs and interests often contradict the general concerns of the body politic.³¹ Yet this positing of specific bodies as objectionable to and perhaps disruptive of the body politic's coherence and unanimity ignores disciplinary mechanisms leveled against specific bodies by liberal, even democratic, regimes. The sentence often handed out is death: the easiest way to imagine specific bodies as members of an abstract body politic is as disembodied souls. Disruptive bodies are disciplined bodies, too. In the nineteenth-century United States, white men as sexual subjects, women in the public sphere, and defiant slaves are fetishized for their supposed proximity to death. The body politic's fear of historically minded embodiment legitimates a necrophilic desire for somnolent bodies whose subjectivities have been laid to rest. As sites of unappeasable materiality, knowledges and discourses such as mesmerism, spiritualism, moral reform, and juridical review engender erotic responses to dead bodies. This attraction stems not from the corpse's decomposition but from its depoliticization, from the ideological allure of the body's hold on eternity and stasis.

In addition to registering discomfort with a vague theoretical "body," I want to further emphasize that embodiment does not automatically challenge the dominance of a generic personhood. After all, as chapters 1 and 3 demonstrate, necrophilia is a deeply embodied political logic that idealizes disconnection and nonresponsiveness. The "body" does not automatically guarantee resistance.³² My argument thus does not restore the dead in a utopian effort to recuperate individuals who successfully moved "outside" privatizing imperatives to occupy an alternative citizenship. Instead, this study turns to the "eccentric" bodies of suicides, the dispossessed, the sexually dissolute, the proletarian, and socially dead slaves to question the presuppositions that establish citizenship as the central category of U.S. political life. As this inquiry cathects with death, *Necro Citizenship* examines how political identity promotes depoliticization, and how democratic incorporation produces alienation and hierarchy.

The death of the political has not been regretted by all, especially socially transparent bodies empowered by traditional hierarchies. Depoliticization ensures that structures of class or racial privilege, for instance, remain static and inevitable. Even as the complex of aversion and desire is often destructive to materially specific bodies, necrophilic citizenship also is productive of a fascination with U.S. identities whose abstraction frees them from the historical conditions of human existence. Still, the political is never completely dead: in its intense aversion to embodiment, citizenship echoes with disavowed desires to remember subjects uncomfortable with the imperatives of rigid formalism and abstract personhood.

A Brief Note on (and against) Interdisciplinarity

This is a book about literature, citizenship, and national politics. Drawing on sites that seem to be at a remove from literature (such as hygienic conduct manuals, protopsychological investigations, séances, and legal opinions), this work pushes past the boundaries of what counts as political in several respects. At one moment, my readings of "nonpolitical" practices such as spirit rapping or antimasturbation campaigns broaden the political to include social discourses that act on private and privatized bodies. Lessons about what it means to be a citizen are performed and rehearsed in activities other than trips to the polling place or town meeting. In Moby-Dick, after all, news of Ishmael's whaling voyage is absurdly sandwiched between headlines of "Grand Contested Election for the Presidency of the United States" and "BLOODY BATTLE IN AFGHANISTAN." 33 Then again, Ishmael's journey into interracial homoeroticism and universal cannibalism has more political significance than Melville at first lets on. As Lauren Berlant writes, "The waste materials of everyday communication in the national public sphere [function] as pivotal documents in the construction, experience, and rhetoric of quotidian citizenship in the United States." 34 While my documents here are not exactly the stuff of everyday communication, the esoteric spirit messages conveyed by

clairvoyants, postmortem speeches of dead slaves in white antislavery literature, and concubinage of "tragic mulattas" all matter profoundly to nineteenth-century understandings of citizenship.

At another moment, however, this very identification of such "nonpolitical" energies as political also resonates with a countervailing and conservative tendency to relocate politics to sites perceived as too personal and idiosyncratic to have political significance. When citizens think about slavery or economic powerlessness via otherworldly communication or anxieties over white male sexual purity, the acuity of historically specific insights into the nature of domination becomes blunted. My decision to scrutinize morbid cultural forms shrouded in ultimate privacy, earthly dispossession, and final estrangement implicitly rests on the recognition that political membership in the United States has enforced a similar obfuscation that minimizes the oppression experienced by democracy's subjects.

Moreover, in an altogether different sense not of moment but of space, the esoteric, popular, and macabre discourses that I bring to a conversation on U.S. citizenship and the public sphere reorient it away from strictly "American" investigations. Guided in part by David Lloyd, Amy Kaplan, and Donald Pease, these inquiries into national belonging and the rational public sphere include material that is neither national nor rational.³⁵ This book's excavations of liberalism, sentimentalism, and bourgeois privacy also lead to "detours" in Caribbean slavery, vodoun, African American superstition, diasporic memory, and suppressed proletarian desire. Understandings of national politics demand dialogue with sub- and nonnational contexts.

Given these centrifugal tendencies away from literature and "America," the description of this project as "interdisciplinary" seems all but a foregone conclusion. I want to resist this, however. The reluctance to proclaim allegiance to interdisciplinary scholarship emerges neither from an unwillingness to make clear a methodology nor a coy maneuver to imply that my understanding and use of interdisciplinarity are still more radical. Rather, it originates in an attempt to think about and privilege literature as sociopolitical critique. Wai Chee Dimock offers a methodology along these lines in her use of literature to historicize and de-universalize justice, and Bill Brown takes a similar tack in arguing that literature best unveils a material history

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of the unconscious.³⁶ Parts of this study are a critique of liberal politics, and in the course of this project, I have come to suspect that interdisciplinarity is often a liberal methodology that organizes research around coherence and consensus. Built around a plurality of approaches and perspectives, interdisciplinarity endeavors to establish a middle ground of knowledge that can readily be accepted by scholars of history, literature, politics, and other relevant disciplines. In liberal fashion, interdisciplinarity quiets disagreement, conflict, and antagonism—all qualities that suffuse the political with potentially democratic energy.

While interdisciplinarity and liberalism do not perfectly align, academic methodologies nevertheless have political effects.³⁷ A desire for balance stamps interdisciplinarity with a liberal ideology that is wary, even contemptuous, of lasting and radical positionality. Wellworn with criticism, liberalism nonetheless has its "virtues," as James Kloppenberg claims. Infused with "the fruitfulness of compromise and the value of balance," liberalism forges beyond political impasse to achieve pragmatic, workable solutions.³⁸ In a similar fashion, the balancing of literary criticism and historical research, to take one academic crossing common to American Studies, produces analysis that satisfies both traditional disciplinary expectations for textual interpretation and desires for positivist examinations of the past. But can the coordination of literature and history also compromise interpretation? In the study of U.S. culture, the breakdown of disciplinary boundaries promotes depoliticization by traversing academic limits in search of a new scholarly world where conclusions are broad enough to be inclusive and final enough to be consensual.

In its never-finished methodological tweaking and crossing of academic boundaries, interdisciplinarity packs an implicit critique of pretensions to unified thinking. The failure to generate a single authoritative interpretation marks the success of interdisciplinarity in destabilizing knowledge. Yet this destabilization still corresponds to liberal politics. By coordinating several approaches, assumptions, or methodologies yet stopping short of evaluating this conjunction, interdisciplinarity seems wary of staking a position that might offend critics from other disciplines. If "radical indeterminacy is . . . characteristic of modern democracy," as Chantal Mouffe insists, then insofar as interdisciplinarity has a politics, it appears democratic. But Mouffe

goes on to qualify this statement by arguing that liberalism seriously dilutes the strength of the political in modern democracy. In its hesitancy to stake a political position, liberalism downplays difference and renders politics inert. Radical indeterminacy does not make a politics: "Undecidability cannot be the last word," writes Mouffe. "Politics calls for *decision* and, despite the difficulty of finding a *final* grounding, any type of political regime consists in establishing a hierarchy among values." ³⁹ Academic practice also calls for decision, which can be difficult when interdisciplinarity's never-finished unsettling of knowledge induces a type of paralysis. Amid pursuit of an integrative ideal, generosity toward multiple methods and orientations can defuse conflict and forestall conclusions.

Comparable to the liberal evacuation of politics, interdisciplinarity seeks a similar adjudication among various disciplines, one that displaces politics and promotes political indecision in its impossible quest for interpretative consensus. While some will no doubt take the equation of interdisciplinarity and mealymouthed liberal politics as my ploy to excuse work that privileges literature as sociopolitical critique, I hope others will see that my concern in reading U.S. national culture in this manner is to encourage an intervention in consensual notions of freedom and categories of political membership. The critical approach here contests seemingly completed constructions of national, state, and public identities in order to examine how the foundations of those identities-notwithstanding the degree of scholarly consensus or liberal agreement-are accidental and contingent.⁴⁰ Necro Citizenship implicitly contends that effective techniques for questioning narratives of political subjectivity need to give up on comprehensive interdisciplinary explanations that dream of satisfying all vantage points.

These questions about what we know and tell ourselves about political subjectivity include: How does the apparatus of citizenship mediate and regulate the freedom that appears between the state and its subjects? How does citizenship idealize nonpolitical forms of subjectivity? How does the subject's death generate the conditions for the citizen's birth? A challenge to these questions lies in a radical democratic power that resists being reduced to what Antonio Negri lists as "pure administrative and diplomatic mediation," "bureaucratic and police activity," constitutionalism, and the contractual nature of sov-

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ereignty. Although these static forms "would like to present themselves as the nature of the political," Negri maintains that they "do not belong to the political but, rather, to the routine of unchanged repetition." Citizenship, under these effects, can be classed among "the effects of dead labor." ⁴¹ But to throw out citizenship and declare the literal death of the category of the citizen are not the only ways to inaugurate radical democracy. Citizenship remains a useful concept for unearthing what is remaindered by the social contract, individualism, liberal consensus, and postures of rational disinterest. Citizenship, it is essential to remember, can be dynamic and deeply political. As a potential site for radical politics, then, citizenship is sedimented with material prehistories of memory, desire, and community that were sloughed off like so much dead skin in order to lay bare the fresh, timeless body of the citizen in the first place. The recovery of such material prehistories may spell the first step toward thinking about democracy.

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FREEDOM AND THE LONGING FOR

DEAD CITIZENSHIP

FREE' DOM, n. A state of exemption from the power or control of another . . . exemption from slavery.
Noah Webster, An American Dictionary of the English Language

Setting his sights on an intellectual position that would announce U.S. cultural independence from European traditions, Emerson prescribed a revolutionary, if not iconoclastic, nominalism: "Free should the scholar be, free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom."1 This desire for a citizen whose speech is unpolluted by historical precedent and whose thoughts are unfettered from tacit ideological assumptions, led the author of "The American Scholar" (1837) on a well-worn search for a linguistic utopia where freedom could be mined-theoretically but not experientially-in a pure state. Almost a decade earlier, Noah Webster embarked on a similar journey to claim a pristine political vocabulary. The project of his famous 1828 lexicon was, as his title suggests, the creation of An American Dictionary of the English Language that would cleanse the citizen's tongue of foreign inflection. Despite such intentions to liberate "freedom," the American Dictionary fails to achieve ahistoricity, its entries burdened with connotations peculiar to U.S. institutions and racial history. This paradox

that seeks to define freedom freely, without regard to prior context, does more than enjoin Emerson's scholar to articulate politics as a tautology: such constraint at the level of the word reveals the material conditions of a freedom that is supposed to have neither history nor context.

The abiding negativity that permeates Emerson and Webster's statements — each searches for a "freedom from" — echoes with the struggle of liberalism to divest political vocabulary of history. While "negative liberty," for commentators like Isaiah Berlin, has typically meant freedom from state interference, in U.S. contexts, claims of an untrammeled freedom depend on the purview of the nation-state.² Rather than fall back on English authors, Webster trusts in his countryman John Adams to provide an American definition: "There can be no free government without a democratical branch in the constitution." For the moment, linguistic and political usage were one. The American Dictionary spells out a federal pedagogy, establishing freedom as isomorphic to the juridical origins of the state. Free becomes demonstrable by a state memory that does not bear the weight of antecedence simply because it is believed that history has not yet debauched the United States, that political decay has not outmoded Adams's meaning. A subsequent example garnered from Geoffrey Chaucer is thus reported as "Not in use," while appearances of the word free in John Dryden are made cumbersome by associations with crime and "slavish conditions." Although Adams provides a virtuous context for freedom, other illustrations from U.S. situations are invoked only to be rejected, to say what freedom is not: "Not enslaved; not in a state of vassalage or dependence" defines the adjective free; as a verb, free means "to manumit; to release from bondage; as, to free a slave." Even though Webster collects thirty-five definitions of free and freedom to give his citizen-reader plenty of linguistic liberty, his list nonetheless freights this ideal with overdetermined referents, including "fetters," "restraint," "servitude," and "bondage." The U.S. tongue-despite Emerson's injunction—was hardly at liberty to propose its own definition of freedom. Harmony between lexical and political sense breaks down, signaling that the messy materiality of history has intruded after all. Citizen, scholar, and lexicographer all find that freedom is an unfree concept, alternately elaborated and confined by the untranscended particularities of national culture.

Thinking against Freedom

To think against freedom—the project of this chapter—is to counter a lingua franca that simultaneously empties freedom of cultural specificity and ensconces it in a nationalist framework. This negative genealogy works against prescription even as it privileges a material register too often ignored or derided by definitions of freedom-the terror of the particular. Excavation of material histories buried by modern democratic citizenship, as Marx implies, uncovers the repressed concreteness of political systems: "In democracy the formal principle is at the same time the *material* principle. Only democracy, therefore, is the true unity of the general and the particular."³ Under this dictum, however, aesthetics intrude on politics, committing Marx to an ultimate ideal of "true unity" that harmonizes democracy at the risk of overlooking its excluded or forgotten discordances. Yes, formalist construals of citizenship cannot proceed without an equal regard for the context of everyday practices, but nationalist imperatives in U.S. contexts moved away from this "material principle" by limiting political subjectivity to state forms. To the extent that this true unity depends on the state's organizing framework, it precludes the scraps of memory and remainders of experience — the messy materials left over from articulations of freedom and democracy-that do not adhere to the crisp, well-ordered lines of an official, aesthetic history. And for so much of U.S. history, race has been at the center of this mess.

Slavery muddles freedom, yoking it to meanings that interfere with the tautological simplicity of Emerson's definition or self-evident character of Adams's example. Desires for an unencumbered vocabulary endure both in contemporary and nineteenth-century cultural criticism, fueling narratives that theorize a noncultural language of freedom. Efforts to liberate freedom from context encourage abstracted definitions, which eviscerate the possible plenitude of citizenship by making freedom the property of a disembodied and historically impoverished subject. The United States puts an exceptionalist spin on Edward Said's argument that "we need to acknowledge frankly that individual freedoms and rights are set irrevocably in a national context."⁴ For once installed in a "national context," U.S. freedom pretends that is has no context: no race, gender, or memory.

This aspiration toward a noncontingent or "free" definition of citizen rights, this longing for a journey back to a virginal liberty, enforces an "ontological cleansing" of the democratic subject. Purged of content, the self seems pristine, verging on recovery of unconditional personhood. For Wai Chee Dimock, this encounter with the "absolute" impoverishes subjectivity, alienating all that is not universal "so that the category of the person can finally be categoric." ⁵ Not only Emerson and Webster but, as we shall see, a wide range of citizens and noncitizens including white antislavery activists, proslavery apologists, and black abolitionists defined freedom with a nationalized vocabulary devoid of any accretions of memory or context. As set out by "The American Scholar," freedom would then be truly free.

Theoretically unfettered yet conceptually bound, freedom answers to questions of syntax, discarding the texture of semantics as a hindrance. As Dimock explains, liberalism sustains a syntactic subject, one whose being is "generalizable," recognizable to the social order only to the extent of that individual's ability to exist abstractly.⁶ Structured by this political syntax, citizens adhere to a lexicon that governs without regard to such "irregular" conditions as institutional location or racial ancestry that particularize subjects. U.S. democracy deploys a freedom that operates above culture, or better yet, makes culture a hindrance to citizenship. Such ecumenical thinking precludes the possibility that the subject instead might be semantic, understood only by urges, remainders, details that diverge from the universal. Clogged with connotations of the past, a semantic subject is made unwieldy by the weight of memory, antecedence, and context. But once ensconced in a language of syntax, as opposed to a language of semantics, freedom has no earthly awkwardness, flitting about effortlessly as both premise and promise.

Reading the Social Contract

THE FINE PRINT

Despite Emerson's intention, freedom cannot be forged independent of context. Political subjectivity in the United States bumps up against constraints, made clumsy by its own historical project to narrow freedom to an experience that is at its core vague and unspecific. As theoretical premise, though, freedom displaces politics by relying on a language whose broad tones mute local or particular connotations disruptive of a national definition. The displacement of politics and political subjectivity by freedom becomes evident at historical moments designed to fuse freedom to the nation-state. One particular instance I have in mind is the Fourth of July, 1855, when the antislavery activist Alonzo Miner celebrated his own inability to follow Emerson's dictum and define freedom freely. In a speech before Boston's city officials, Miner basked in a lack of discursive freedom: "We are assembled, fellow citizens, on one of those occasions when an orator is not permitted to select his theme. The occasion itself presents it."7 Miner is not lodging a complaint; he well understands that freedom demands the policing of discourse. To describe freedom is to ascribe to a language regulated by national imperatives. But as with Webster's performance in the American Dictionary, this Fourth of July address seems awkward in the context of slavery.

Slavery forces embodiment and compulsion on freedom: "*Liberty, in the glory of its conception, the partiality of its embodiment, and the imperativeness of its demands,* directs our thoughts to-day," states Miner.⁸ In the reproving style of a patriotic boast become jeremiad, the peculiar nature of U.S. slavery ravishes freedom, stripping away the innocence of prehistory and subjecting politics to intercourse with institutions. Gone is any hope of Marx's aesthetic unity between formal democracy and the material needs of its citizens. Contact with the brutal affairs of the social world explains freedom's ungainly embodiment. In Miner's words:

Thus far the new-born babe was full of promise. But, alas! its quiet slumbers were soon disturbed by the mutterings of distant thunder. The dark cloud which skirts our southern horizon to-day—nay, by which the whole heavens is being rapidly overcast—was then, as now, charged with forked lightnings. . . . The door left open, slavery has entered, a harlot, into the temple of liberty, and flaunts her shame in the glare of the noon-day sun! Ah! and she is not without progeny! As Abraham of old wickedly welcomed his two sons, "the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman," so has our Federal Union welcomed its children, two and two, a slave state hand in hand with a free state. . . . But let us remember that

"he who was of the bond-woman, *was born after the flesh;* but he of the free woman was by *promise.*"9

Freedom is a woman with a history, and as Victorian moral codes dictated, no honorable woman wanted a history for her body. Once embodied, freedom acquires sexual identity, the mere having of which opens democracy up to defilement. The charge of harlotry assigns freedom an (im)moral condition, its status no longer unconditional, but mediated by sentimental dictates of purity. Personified after this fashion and intimately located in the citizen's body, politics never outstrips its semantic genealogy to mature as a purely syntactical and generic relation. No longer a social or institutional virgin, freedom associates all too freely with the history of slavery. Even in a masculine guise, liberty is victimized by its own genealogy: the fault of the bondwoman's son is that he is the bondwoman's son. A free progeny, in contrast, has no past, only the as-yet-still-prehistorical sense of "*promise*." The unfree body sags under the weight of antecedence, while the free citizen knows only the idealization of a future that is still not fleshed out.

The bleaker passages in Miner's speech fear that the death of liberty looms on the political horizon. Yet the implication also exists that death is not to be dreaded but welcomed. This macabre urgemuch like the conviction that death redeems a sexually dishonored woman-inheres in the particular conjunctions that locate political subjectivity amid sexual and racial exchanges. The longing for the discarnate does more than lodge a bloodless abstraction at the heart of freedom. As Charles Mills contends in The Racial Contract, the problem with "mainstream political theory is not with abstraction itself ... but with an *idealizing* abstraction that abstracts *away* from the crucial realities of the racial polity." Building on Carole Pateman's assertion that (men's) civic individuality stems not from a social contract but a "sexual contract" that enforces women's subjection, Mills maintains that white males establish lives of freedom through the civil, social, and biological deaths of nonwhites.¹⁰ Along with recent critiques of citizenship and rights, Mills's argument reveals that airy abstractions legitimate practices that exclude and oppress women, enslave and colonize nonwhites, and dispossess and exterminate indigenous peoples. Thus, for Lauren Berlant, "the rhetoric of the bodiless political citizen, the generic 'person' whose political identity is a priori

precisely because it is, in theory, non-corporeal," warrants obsessive embodiments of "American women and African-Americans."¹¹ This targeting of bodily difference, as Dana Nelson's discussions of craniology and gynecology show, effects equality for those white men accorded full membership in the state.¹² But the freedom shared among the generic subjects of U.S. democracy does not record how its construction depends on the morbid workings of sexual and racial contracts; it is this forgetting that allows for citizenship's naturalization. Disavowal of the repressed matter of the social contract has an insidious double effect: not only does it identify the corporeality of women and minorities as signs of political illegitimacy and civic disqualification but these embodied signs also work inversely to secure, in Robyn Wiegman's words, "the corporeal abstraction accorded white masculinity that underwrites a host of civic entitlements."¹³

Liberal reform projects to redistribute formal equality under the law and other entitlements are flawed because they pivot on appeals to extend abstract freedom to particular bodies denied the privilege of disembodiment rather than on tactics to concretize freedom by making its usage specific, historical, and material. The example of Emerson reveals the failure of remaining within a national idiom that thinks for and not against freedom. As abolitionism roused his reluctant sympathies, Emerson modified his earlier commitment to a wholly syntactic freedom by imagining a definition that could be put into practice. To the 1854 antislavery compendium, Autographs for Freedom, he contributed a poem called "On Freedom," which offers a self-critical meditation on attempts to write poetry in support of black emancipation. The Concord sage recalls a former undertaking to "rehearse / Freedom's paean in my verse," an effort that failed because, as he understands it, abstract political qualities refuse translation to the slave's specific institutional condition.¹⁴ The sticking point is not that slaves may be unfit for freedom; rather, the uncertainty is whether freedom, absolute and unconditional, can be negotiated so that its promise will touch the highly mediated body and being of the slave. Can freedom endure the historical accents of African Americans who give voice to experiences so discordant to white Americans that freedom no longer seems "self-evident"?

Meditations "on freedom" stumble against material contexts that saturate the slave's condition. Unlike the limitless tautology of free-

dom in "The American Scholar," black freedom, for Emerson, is an impossible paradox that founders on tangible meanings of race: the slave is sentenced to a social condition, where rights are not absolute but conditional on a master's will. The slave's distance from "natural" rights explains why the poem's title is "On Freedom" as opposed to "Freedom." Lacking the preposition, the title would adduce a direct, unmediated knowledge so clearly abrogated by the disturbing richness of the semantic field (civil statutes, ethnological justifications, proslavery exegesis of scripture, and so forth) that circumscribes slave populations. A more simple title-such as "Freedom" -tends towards isomorphism, reducing meaning to formalities of syntax. That would be freedom without narrative, without context, a culturally abstract value resistant to encroachments of law or custom. Ignoring the "spirit" who says that freedom is unutterable in this world, the poet also tries his hand at Miner's Fourth of July project of embodying freedom. To quote Emerson's poem in full:

> Once I wished I might rehearse Freedom's paean in my verse, That the slave who caught the strain Should throb until he [sic] snapt his chain. But the Spirit said, "Not so; Speak it not, or speak it low; Name not lightly to be said, Gift too precious to be prayed, Passion not to be exprest But by heaving of the breast; Yet,-would'st thou the mountain find Where this deity is shrined, Who gives the seas and sunset-skies Their unspent beauty of surprise, And, when it lists him, waken can Brute and savage into man; Or, if in thy heart he shine, Blends the starry fates with thine, Draws angels nigh to dwell with thee, And makes thy thoughts archangels be;

Freedom's secret would'st thou know?— Right thou feelst rashly do.¹⁵

The speaker's project to distill freedom's essence collapses because his search involves the nonessential world of the slave. His liberatory impulse is desublimated in the encounter with "the slave who . . . Should throb until he snapt his chain." As a confession of Emerson's fumbling to endorse abolition, this poem does not celebrate attempts to realize freedom on black flesh; rather, it does the opposite, critiquing the desire to embody freedom. He turns to "the Spirit," who discourages corporeal politics, urging the speaker not to defile freedom by speaking its name. A corporeal politics is an imperfect one. The poet's consciousness must therefore be purified, ascending from mountains to stellar climes to heaven itself. Stripped of earthly trappings, he encounters a generalized citizenship. As "brute" and "savage" evolve into "man," the speaker achieves an impregnable perspective as many critics have approvingly noted. Emerson conjoins "liberty and solitude," according to David Bromwich, envisioning an autonomous position that ensures an uncorrupted subjectivity by virtue of its aloneness.¹⁶ George Kateb reaches similar conclusions, suggesting that Emerson's political philosophy seeks a "less contingen[t]" identity that "must find its location elsewhere than in worldly appearance or activity."¹⁷ Following the lead of these scholars, one finds that "On Freedom" registers failure because of its activist desire to implement the ideal of freedom in an imperfect world. Yet such interpretations hinge on a slippage that confuses political liberty with personal independence: to cite Bromwich, "What [Emerson] did was to describe, with sufficient plainness and sufficient profoundness, a condition of personal independence. And that was enough."18 When freedom requires neither justification nor explanation, when syntactic hermeticism provides sole validation, rights withstand mediation and negotiation because they lack realization. Freedom seems most complete when most disembodied.

Envisioned as word and not flesh, construed as syntax and not an accretion of semantic meaning, freedom is best defined by itself. This tautology captures the dictum of "The American Scholar" that citizens enjoy perfect freedom in defining freedom. Or, to rephrase

Bromwich, this construction of freedom appears to be enough: thus conceived, freedom seems "sufficient" because it does not admit complicating semantics-for example, a slave straining against chainsthat tangle simple, straightforward definitions. This vague, nonideological freedom nonetheless plays an ideological role by administering a nationalized pedagogy that unites even the most politically disparate groups. Slave narratives, antislavery poetry, and proslavery novels share a conceptual idiom that figures freedom as a disembodied proposition. Freedom depends on a depoliticized lexicon that overlooks sectional disturbances, wounded persons, and other anomalous remainders that make messy the order of national definition. Northern liberal and Southern conservative, abolitionist and slaveholder. former slave and free white citizen articulated politics via a vocabulary that surpasses, even annihilates, consideration of everyday practice, entrenched custom, economic exploitation, and ideological belief-all the material and immaterial conditions specific enough to particularize and fracture freedom into a disorganized archive of incommensurate experiences and frustrated expectations. Because abolitionists, both black and white, advanced a definition of freedom that grasped for absolutes and turned away from accidents of the flesh, their texts reproduced a nationalized vocabulary of disembodiment that made the agitation for freedom at times uncannily consistent with proslavery defenses.¹⁹ Spoken without context, freedom has little difficulty in providing the same content to conclaves with warring interests.

Give Me Liberty and Death

The blacks, once you get them started, they glory in death. — *David Walker's Appeal* (1829)

"The thought of suicide flashed in my brain," says an Indian princess in "The Daughter of the Riccarees," a short story included in the antislavery annual, *The Liberty Bell*. Captured into slavery, this chief's daughter looks to escape by overturning the canoe that carries her deeper into bondage: "A sudden movement to the side—the boat

would upset and I should be free." 20 Trapped by forged documents that "prove" her a slave, she invokes a familiar U.S. formula that equates freedom and death. The Indian princess gains easy access to Patrick Henry's patriotic arsenal because Native Americans had been processed by an iron rhetoric that made the choice between two absolutes, freedom and death, the same option. Entire tribes, according to romantic works in the vein of James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans (1826) or Ann Stephens's Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter (1860), pursued death in order to preserve natural liberty rather than endure a life hemmed in by fences and property markers. This voluntaristic logic signals a subtle yet important departure from Henry's ultimatum: it is not that death is a realistic alternative to an unrealizable freedom but rather that death figures and acts as freedom. With the social death of slavery as a national institution, it made little difference as far as the embodied subject was here concerned whether she was being given liberty or death. The daughter of the Riccarees construes death as freedom because suicide-a selfchosen autonomous act-has all the trappings of liberty. Indeed, by 1853, William Wells Brown could assert in the first African American novel, Clotel, that "Death is Freedom."²¹

The Indian princess employs a perfectly balanced metaphor; death substitutes for freedom because unconditionality and absolutism are the general conditions of each. Her stoic resistance limns a nationally pleasing narrative by confirming freedom as a noncultural, eternal value and making the fate of Native Americans a matter of individual proclivity, ahistorical and natural. For the daughter of the Riccarees, the severe dichotomy orchestrated by Henry implodes as the specter of death becomes the promise of freedom; the opposition between the two terms evaporates since their exchange occurs in a generalizable framework in which specific issues of federally mandated removal, tribal autonomy, and racial heritage evaporate as well. With this oblivion of historical consciousness comes the repression of any national recognition of Indian removals and genocide. Whether the Indian princess receives liberty or death is no longer the issue; what is instead at stake is her ability to give white citizens the psychological freedom of forgetting their democracy's injustice toward indigenous peoples. Whereas the challenge of "liberty or death" registers colonial

resistance to British rule, by the mid-nineteenth century, the metaphor of death as freedom epitomizes American resistance to culture and its contexts.

Despite an anticultural stance, the metaphor of death as freedom saturates nineteenth-century culture, recurring across a range of texts from African American narratives to the moonlit, magnolia settings of proslavery novels. With little connection to material life, an inert freedom fits the diverse agendas of black abolitionist, white antislavery activist, and slaveholder. Although divided by race, background, and education, free white citizen and black noncitizen adhere to a vocabulary whose abstruseness best suits the normative legal identity of white manhood. Freedom's morbid stakes help sow what Lauren Berlant calls "an ideology of dead citizenship," a political subjectivity impervious to historical life in the public sphere.²² Legitimate citizens of the state, white propertied males, reap tremendous advantage from this gruesome metaphor-namely, that of displacing disavowed material and corporeal encumbrances onto other bodies condemned to death. When the daughter of the Riccarees, for instance, ventriloquizes "liberty or death," she deploys a "prosthetic body" of whiteness and maleness that acts, in Berlant's words, as "an apotropaic shield against penetration and further delegitimation." ²³ Yet this virtual embodiment of Henry's nationally sanctioned, white male, slaveholding privilege only protects her fictive identity while threatening her actual enslaved body with annihilation. The Indian princess sold into bondage, her racially commodified body a condensation of histories of the slave trade and Native American genocide, risks death to leave citizenship free of any past or context.

Triply burdened by her gender, genealogy, and exposure to slavery, the daughter of the Riccarees materializes in a differential space between the white male subject and the encumbrances that he negates and disowns. Unlike this heroine of antislavery romance, the officially recognized citizen is not sentenced to a political fate as drastic or final as suicide. Such a citizen can still choose liberty *or* death, whereas nonwhites and women suffer the conjunction of liberty *and* death. The citizen and the Indian princess who invoke Henry each appeal to citizenship as an intermediate form of embodiment—Berlant's prosthesis—but this use of citizenship as a shield offers protection to only one of them. The virtual body of the citizen never dies since it was

never alive in the first place. The subject's body, in contrast, is exposed to political injury and can fall victim to social death. For the white male subject as citizen, his actual body aligns nicely with the prosthetic body in ways that almost completely screen him from this sort of harm. Few appendages of identity jut out from behind the shield. For a deeply historical subject like the Indian princess subjected to slavery, however, the performance of citizenship is incomplete, her past too large to be fully protected by its prosthetic shield. Her body is exposed to mortal harm.

The authors and editors who narrate and append slave autobiography give prosthetic performances—blacks employ classical tropes associated with white letters, while whites vicariously imagine the slave's feelings—that allow speakers to transcend "restrictive" affiliations of racial ancestry. *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane* (1842) stages this racial ventriloquism by prefacing an African American autobiography with a white-authored poem purporting to be the lament of a black woman. "The Slave Mother's Appeal to Her Infant Child" searches after an invulnerable freedom by rehearsing a national metaphor of deathly citizenship. Dressed in blackface, as it were, the poet describes an ironic enfranchisement:

> And gladly would I lay thee down To sleep beneath the sod, And give thy gentle spirit back, Unmarr'd with grief, to God: The tears I shed upon that turf Should whisper peace to me, And tell me in the spirit land My lovely babe was free.²⁴

Infanticide not only defeats the slaveholder who views motherhood as the reproduction of capital; it also thwarts history. Forcibly releasing her child from the struggles of existence, the slave mother ensures that he or she will never accrue historical weight, instead remaining innocent of experience, memory, and trauma. The white poet-as-slave mother idealizes infant purity in an effort to withstand the traffic of worldly context. Death extricates the innocent from an institutional circulation that leaves the flesh scarred and the spirit

"marr'd." Rescued from physical existence before the disorderly accumulation of slave experience sets in, the subject of this poetic address achieves emancipation through a severe final estrangement. Emancipation occurs when there is no subject left to emancipate. Within the lines of this poem and the limits of ideology, freedom is readily realized because the infant's life itself lacks realization.

A morbid politics holds out the promise of returning the subject to an absolute existence; in psychoanalytic terms, death defines an inorganic state impervious to change where satisfaction is permanent. Sigmund Freud's idea of the death instinct as "the most universal endeavor of all living substance" can be honed to provide insight into the *political* desire that freights the drive for death within emancipatory rhetoric.²⁵ Whereas Freud offers Thanatos as a transcendent key to human behavior, I see death not as a universal biological event but a culturally specific desire that provides insight into political behavior. In terms of citizenship, an understanding of death as inescapably historical and discursive impedes the naturalization of liberty as a matter of instinct or choice. Death, as an abstract final category, attracts citizens because it abnegates the constant struggle to secure freedom as well as the enduring anxiety that this freedom will vanish. This oscillation expresses *fort/da*: the dismaying recognition that the source of pleasure is gone (fort) alternates with the satisfaction that the source of pleasure is here (da). In death, no need exists to play this fort/da game because the inorganic state ensures that no source of pleasure will ever disappear as pleasure itself has been removed beyond a dynamic world of change and fluctuation. Thanatos so infuses the citizen's desire because death makes freedom irrelevant by locating the subject in a realm beyond striving or contention. Death offers noncontingent political satisfaction by promising that the citizen will not have to enter a material world that historicizes, modifies, and makes liberty conditional. Death exempts the slave mother's child from the institutional fort/da game that he or she is destined to lose; the child's original freedom suffers no abridgment from the daily demands of masters and overseers. Death secures "absolute repose," ensuring that neither law nor custom will impinge on "innate" rights.²⁶ The slave child's freedom never becomes semantic; it never accrues texture or weight, and instead remains as pure as the sublime heights of Emer-

son's verse. For the slave child, freedom is uncompromised, but it is necessarily also without substance, purely a question of syntax.

However maudlin, this infanticide suggests the unsentimental workings of liberal freedom as secured by the social contract. The fantasy of a dead slave child enables the disavowal of racial particularities, barring corporeal matter from enfranchisement while authorizing a bodiless, transparent subject-not uncoincidentally the subjectivity that white men enjoy—as the sharer of liberty. Because the slave child literalizes the death drive crucial to negative freedom, the white citizen escapes that fatal injunction. Citizen and slave child are cemented by a death pact that, as with Berlant's logic of prosthesis, safeguards the abstracted person from the degradations of institutional exposure. Though earlier the daughter of the Riccarees deploys the white masculinity of Henry's voice as protection and here the ventriloquized slave body shields the white poet, the effects are the same: in both cases, racial and gendered bodies incur the crushing weight of history, thus freeing the unmarked, entitled subject from an encounter with culture that would definitely leave its marks.

The African American voice of Lunsford Lane that follows the strained pathos of the white-authored "Slave Mother's Appeal" also pursues Thanatos on its quest toward emancipation. His Narrative takes the form of a Ben Franklin-like accounting that memorializes the slave's economy to redeem wife, mother, and seven children from bondage. Lane offers a strict tally of slavery's capitalist contradictions that allow a commodity to liberate, if not humanize, him- or herself through purchase. Lane's participation in this "slave trade" pursues a teleology that outstrips the material circumstances of freedom, leaving only a metaphysical impression lacking contour and definition: "When the money was paid to my mistress . . . I felt that I was free. And a queer and a joyous feeling it is to one who has been a slave. I cannot describe it, only it seemed as though I was in heaven." 27 Sublimity and transcendence suffuse his arrival in the North: "I felt when my feet struck the pavements of Philadelphia, as though I had passed into another world." Readers "may possibly form some distant idea, like the ray of the setting sun from the far off mountain top," but the "heaven" of the slave's emancipation remains beyond description, imprint, and legibility in ways that contrast the supple

flesh of the bondsperson.²⁸ Unlike the slave mother's child who can be "marr'd," Lane envisions a liberated self residing beyond fort/da politics, a positionality in which freedom defies the caprices and demands of slaveholders. As William Andrews explains, Lane hits on an "inner self, apparently unfixed and unitary, [that] seems untouched, inviolable." 29 Yet Lane fails to bask in a hermetic definition of freedom, prompting what must have been a troubling question for his audience: "I cannot describe my feelings to those who have never been slaves; then why should I attempt it?" 30 Even as his Narrative claims abstract rights, Lane particularizes freedom with the material accents of unspeakable black experience. He confronts the problem of Emerson's "On Freedom," watching the disappearance of freedom amid a practical struggle to express it. His social existence forces on him a painful knowledge that never encumbers the "free" child of the "Slave Mother's Appeal." What remains inviolable is not the self represented in Narrative of Lunsford Lane but the freedom that neither the ex-slave nor his audience can fully grasp.

Much as white antislavery verse prefaces Lane's autobiography, Grace Greenwood's poem, "The Leap from the Long Bridge," sutures the climax of *Clotel* when the title character jumps to her death to escape slavery's clutches. Because Clotel's act is final—even after her body floats ashore it is not reclaimed by her pursuers—Greenwood's eulogy ends with an ecstatic portrait of freedom:

Joy! the hunted slave is free! That bond-woman's corse [corpse]—let Potomac's proud wave Go bear it along *by our Washington's grave* ... A weak woman's corse, by freemen chased down; Hurrah for our country! hurrah! To freedom she leaped, through drowning and death— Hurrah for our country! hurrah!³¹

As Clotel leaves her body, all that remains is the defiled national body, the object of the poet's sardonic praise. The corpse outruns her own body as well as the slave hunters. She prevails over commodification because her physical existence drops away as an encumbrance, liberating her spirit. The illustration of her suicide equates freedom and



I Dramatizing the moment where "death is freedom," Clotel's emancipatory/suicidal leap into the Potomac gainsays Brown's verbal descriptions of her white womanhood. (Source: William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States* [London: Partridge and Oakley, 1853], courtesy of the Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, Astor, Lennox, and Tilden Foundations.)

death by picturing her body at the moment of disembodiment, a contradictory pose echoed by a simultaneous insistence on and disavowal of her blackness (see figure 1). Even though Brown repeatedly states that Clotel—while cross-dressing—is so close to appearing white that she can pass as an Italian or Spanish gentleman, the illustration darkly shades her face, disputing verbal description. Disjunctions between visual and written body encapsulate her struggle to escape both the slave catchers and social incrustations that encode her body. The legal significance of maternal ancestry bears her downward, but the gossamer dress propels her above racial legacies. Vested with black blood, Clotel futilely flees her history; but dressed in the costume of white womanhood, she has neither history nor body to worry about. In mock address to Clotel's frustrated jailers, Greenwood's abolitionist dirge revels in a twin triumph over racist institutions and racial

heritage that equally imprison the subject: "The form thou would'st fetter—returned to its God."³² An embrace of Thanatos enables a "return to the quiescence of the inorganic world" where human laws have no purchase on Clotel.³³ Although the engraving freezes an episode from Brown's narrative, importantly, it acts less as narrative itself and more as a timeless moment, insulated from change and continuation. Clotel never falls in this image; she is always ascending the brutelike men who would bind her to a system upheld by legal precedent and social custom.

This mosaic of African American narrative, white poetry, and the blackface depiction of a near-white quadroon is unified by Brown's title to this chapter: "Death Is Freedom." Death liberates the subject from social meanings of race, granting her an unencumbered freedom. Suicide secures a necrophilic fantasy of innate natural liberty by discounting history: both Clotel's maternal legacy as a slave woman's daughter and national traditions of slaveholding fail to signify in a culturally lifeless vacuum. After all, it is the juridical weight of embodiment, specifically her genealogy and the inscription of legal codes on her complexion, that fetters her to a system of concubinage and apartheid. Death allows her to emulate Emerson's scholar and be free of such institutional definitions. This morbid vocabulary endeavors to emancipate political being from the material contingencies of fort/da. It must be recognized, however, that the desire to locate Clotel beyond sociohistorical life is itself historical, fully participatory in a national logic of deathly citizenship.

Necrophilic scenarios arise when the formal principles of freedom are compromised by material histories that attenuate and embed political subjectivity. The autobiography of fugitive slave Henry Bibb explores Thanatos as a means of cauterizing traumatic memories linking him to his family still held in bondage. Bibb is so caught up in the tensions of fort/da that he risks recapture, stealing back across the Mason-Dixon Line in an effort to lead his wife and daughter, whom he calls the "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," to liberty. His commitment to intersubjectivity departs from a traditional political identity by situating freedom in a shared context that extends beyond the borders of the self. Ultimately, though, Bibb finds his freedom compromised by the corporeality of others. Frustrated in his first attempt to rescue his family, he planned to try again until he "learned, on

inquiry, and from good authority, that my wife was living in a state of adultery with her master, and had been for the last three years.... She has ever since been regarded as theoretically and practically dead to me as a wife."³⁴ His *Narrative* (1850) issues a death sentence that liberates its author, disencumbering subjectivity of painful attachments. Bibb longs to articulate an identity shorn of affiliation, to inscribe a self that will be as hermetic as a definition of freedom that needs neither reference nor antecedence.

Bibb's necrophilic musings fulfill his resolution to secure freedom in noncontingency. He struggles not only against the arbitrary will of slave owners but also the lure of domestic entanglements, which he fears will extinguish the "fire of liberty within my breast" by freighting his quest with specific, culturally demeaning markers. These markers are gendered, embodied in the "charms and influence of a female," who soon becomes his wife. Bibb rebukes himself for allowing marriage to "obstruct my way to the land of liberty":

To think that after I had determined to carry out the great idea which is so universally and practically acknowledged among all the civilized nations of the earth, that I would be free or die, I suffered myself to be turned aside by the fascinating charms of a female, who gradually won my attention from an object so high as that of liberty; and an object which I held paramount to all others.

He does not have to overcome *his* gender as a male; after all, masculinity is already so culturally transparent that it does not bear on identity. Instead, his autobiography suggests that he has to transcend his wife's gender, which imbricates him in the reproduction of capital at the heart of slavery. How can he pursue abstraction, Bibb asks, when he particularizes himself with gendered attachments? His official status as chattel is a social designation, but his "freely" chosen acceptance of the additional role of husband and father further impinges on his subjectivity. When Bibb represents "the society of young women" as a threat to freedom, he objects to society first and foremost; he resorts to misogyny only because woman—much more so than man—has a social body, which he conflates with the constraint of the South's domestic institution. The problem with his slave wife, Malinda, is that she is preeminently social, a tempting embodiment that burdens him with contingency.³⁵ Malinda is the "harlot" who

enters "the temple of liberty" in Miner's Fourth of July oration: sexuality in each instance is not without allure but for political reasons it becomes the source of a morbid eroticism. By declaring his wife "theoretically and practically dead," Bibb divorces himself from the bondage she has come to represent as a participant, however reluctant, in an adulterous affair with a figure of white domination. Freedom, in the terms of his *Narrative*, enforces emancipation from all contexts (and the persons who inhabit those contexts) that formerly mediated his being.

Bibb's morbidly stated alienation from his own wife (and thus his own historicity) puts an additional wrinkle in the social contract revised as the "racial contract" by Charles Mills: the social/racial contract functions as a death sentence. Bibb agrees to a fantasy of her death because it frees him. Her death enables him to live, even if only via a temporary indulgence in necrophilia, as a white male blessed with the power to displace his own encumbered social body onto an illegitimate (in this case, sexually illegitimate) body. Bibb has a contract out on his wife, not in the Lockean sense but in the "good fella" parlance of a "hit" used to dispose of people whose fidelity and loyalty are in doubt. Much as a suspected associate poses a threat to the "organization's" insular unity, so too Bibb's wife, as a representative of slaves and women, embodies an excessive and possessed corporeality that endangers his autonomy. The solution, in effect, is to put the social contract out on Malinda: he introduces the facts of her adultery, and then appeals to "the law of God and man" to obtain a judgment that renders "my former wife as dead to me." 36 I draw this perhaps sensational analogy of the social contract to a murderous contract or hit in order to remark on the mortal underside of liberalism. Targeted by the social/sexual/racial contract, the slave wife, as shorthand for historically abjected populations, materializes the institutional and corporeal encumbrances from which white male freedom divorced itself. The social death of these other bodies leaves the citizen free.

While marriage, especially a legally unsanctioned one like Bibb's, can be annulled precisely because it is a contract, paternity remains. Blood refuses either abridgment or denial. Bibb laments that "I *was* a husband and *am* the father of slaves who are still left to linger out their days in hopeless bondage." For the fugitive slave, a nationalized vo-

cabulary dictates disturbing conjugations of temporality: unlike the social designation of husband, which slips into the past, its inflection on his identity now dissipated, fatherhood persists, burdening his supposedly freed self with regret and responsibility. Bibb's trek toward freedom stumbles against context, because it is less of a physical journey than a story of psychological indebtedness: "But oh! when I remember that my daughter, my only child, is still there, destined to share the fate of all these calamities, it is too much to bear."³⁷ His painfully rendered thoughts of his wife and daughter document a genealogical sense of freedom, one forced to contend with obligations that cannot be relegated to the past. Unlike "The American Scholar," his experience of defining freedom is a most unfree affair. Bibb's story reveals a pivotal grammatical principle of nationalized vocabulary: freedom cannot "bear" the weight of memory.

Killing off Free Citizens, or The Logic of Political Necrophilia

Death obviates materiality, liberating freedom from bodies that give flesh to responsibility, family, and above all, remembrance. Reliance on Thanatos to evade institutional unfreedom signals, for Paul Gilroy, a revolutionary aesthetic: the "preference for death fits readily with archival material on the practice of slave suicide and needs also to be seen alongside other representations of death as agency that can be found in early African American fiction." ³⁸ Looking to fugitive slave Margaret Garner's "emancipatory assault on her children," Gilroy describes an ethic of liberty that disdains the "formal logic and rational calculation characteristic of modern western thinking" in favor of ecstatic irrationality. Although predicated on the contention that this freedom withstands a dominant epistemology, Gilroy's position repeats a nationalized vocabulary infused with necrophilia. Pinpointing the impulse toward death as a "moment of jubilee" that resists rational politics, Gilroy nonetheless adheres to a grammar operative on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line as well as the color line.³⁹ While I do not dispute the archival evidence on slave suicide or discount the heroic resistance to bondage that death implies, the fact that proslavery nar-

ratives (as I will show) adduce moments of deathlike freedom leads to questions about what Gilroy sees as the distinctness of African American notions of freedom, and invites speculation about a freedom that appeals equally to slave and slaveholder. Disconcerting convergences among white abolitionist, African American, and proslavery writers suggest a conceptual vortex that renders immaterial the differences between various perspectives on black enslavement because all make recourse to an infinitely porous and eternally lifeless political subject.

Clotel's revolutionary enactment of Patrick Henry's words are also mouthed by the benevolent masters of plantation novels who hold forth a millennial vision that idealizes freedom as a final unvielding refuge. When Dinah, a slave in the procolonizationist tale Frank Freeman's Barber Shop (1852), dies, religious and political rhetoric merge to sketch an innocuous black emancipation acceptable to all factions of a Christian country: "An idolater was saved! A slave was free!" ⁴⁰ Dinah no longer contends with the frustrations of fort/da; death - to recall a phrase from Gilroy-represents a moment of jubilee in which emancipation is eternal because Dinah's historical existence as a slave has been laid to rest. The New England maiden in The Planter's Northern Bride (1854) who seeks to be true to her abolitionist upbringing finds solace in this sort of thinking when she comes to the South. After watching at the deathbed of the slave Dilsey, she is encouraged by her slaveholding husband to view this departed faithful servant, exiled for life from any prospect of democratic community, as being "now enfranchised" in the heavenly host.⁴¹ As Lunsford Lane makes clear, freedom entails a spiritual dimension, but for complacent figures like Dinah and Dilsey as well as disgruntled transgressors like Clotel, this transcendent state excludes the very materiality that makes freedom a meaningful relation lived among others.

As a triumphant aversion to contingency, Thanatos radiates from a widespread anxiety over the specifics of blackness that mediate the lives of the unfree. Ironically, however, it is the apologist text that perceives how commitment to an abstract freedom derives from discomfort with racial bodies. In an attack on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and other antislavery novels, the narrator of *Frank Freeman's Barber Shop* discerns a racial contract that underpins a topos of deathly freedom. His incisive comments, though perhaps disingenuous in their concern for blacks, reveal freedom's antagonism to accidents of the flesh:

It is remarkable that writers of *fictions* make their heroes and heroines beautiful mulattoes; always so, if they are to come North among the free! But surely a black person is the best representative of the blacks; and our sympathies should be enlisted for the slave! and that, if ugly and black, with crisped and matted hair; and not only for those whose blood can be seen blushing through their cheeks, and their hair wavy and glossy and rich as floss silk. Writers of *fiction kill off* the jet black—not knowing exactly how to *work them* advantageously to the North.⁴²

Even as this passage promotes stereotypical characterizations, the apologist narrator deconstructs the prejudicial logic that construes racial markings as impediments to liberty. Hence the need to cast off the corporeal textures imprinted by legal and economic systems: death becomes mandated for all whose features are not muted or bland enough to be socially transparent. Because allusions to slavery are quiescent in "beautiful mulattoes," their freedom seems purely syntactic, abiding the universal rules governing political subjectivity. But for blacks, for persons without nationally normalized appearances, existence is profoundly semantic, burdened with the accumulated weight of ethnological, juridical, and biblical justifications of African servitude. To achieve freedom, one must not simply escape to the North; one must also escape all material remainders that give substance to subjectivity and encumber freedom. Blacks are manumitted by annihilating all textures that impede a generic existence. Freedom can only be the subject of "fiction" because any infusion of social matter-for example, "crisped and matted hair"-enslaves the body to cultural contexts disdained by an ideology of abstraction and noncontingency. National vocabulary is more comfortable with freedom as fictional proposition than material embodiment.

Even as apologist fiction assents to and reworks the incendiary formula "liberty or death," proslavery representations question if all persons can endure the harsh absolutism that this choice entails. Is the escaped slave ready for the airy rights of freedom? Hitherto confined within a communal nexus of plantation life, forced to be at home within a highly regimented patriarchy, the self-emancipated slave seems abandoned to an abstract being, forlorn and isolated, on arrival in the North. The plantation novel features the recurring scene in which a runaway begs to be reenslaved so that he or she once

again may enjoy a life of embodiment and substance. Too often, however, the planter refuses to encroach on the fugitive's liberty, and instead uses the occasion to spell out a lesson that Saxon hardiness is the only suitable ground for enfranchisement. The master displays an unwillingness to reintegrate the quondam slave into what proslavery sentimentalism represents as the evangelical richness and communal bounty of plantation life. The fugitive's rashly chosen freedom leaves him or her shorn of social context in ways that are absolute and as final as death. Abandoning the fugitive to an absolute and noncontingent freedom, the "judicious" slaveholder of apologist literature refuses to let the slave return "home" to family and friends. The genteel planter of Aunt Phillis's Cabin (1852) traveling in the North is beseeched by his former slave, Simon, now destitute, "Oh, master . . . won't you take me back?"⁴³ The slave longs for kin and context; he desires a contingent identity that discovers political significance in relation to others. This wish to forfeit the hallmarks of abstract rights in favor of familiar circumstances only demonstrates, in the terms of the proslavery universe, a peculiarly "African" distaste for an unconditional existence necessary for democratic privileges. Such episodes concretize the argument of proslavery theorists who labored to justify Southern institutional life as a setting of mutual dependence between masters and slaves that created affiliations unknown in the wolfish liberty of the North. The planter in Aunt Phillis's Cabin, displacing very real efforts to recover escaped chattel, thus refuses to intrude on the desolate sanctity of the fugitive: "Can't trust you, Simon . . . none of your fellow-servants want you back. You have no relations." 44 Condemned to having no relations, deprived of the heartfelt bonds cementing master and "servant," the freed slave of the proslavery novel proves himself unfit for a nationalized freedom that balks at reference and contingency.

"Liberty or death" seemingly presents an option, but for the slaves of abolitionist as well as proslavery fiction, no choice exists. Absolute, final, and hostile to corporeal history, liberty and death collapse into a political experience that removes the subject beyond the sensuousness of community, particularity, and memory. Whether the slave receives disembodied enfranchisement as Dilsey and Dinah did or is "kill[ed] off" by antislavery writers, whether the result is freedom or death, makes little difference since each fate forever seals the subject in a depthless existence beyond kin and community. When, in

thick dialect, a runaway in Uncle Robin, in His Cabin in Virginia, and Tom without One in Boston (1853) laments his lack of institutional place-"What shill I do? I does wan' go back so much to Fugginy, to see my daddy an' my mammy, my masser and my missis, an' all de black folks"-he despairs the aloneness of freedom.45 Proslavery literature effectively rewrites American revolutionary dictum, much as *Clotel* does, so that liberty is death. The slaves of proslavery literature who fear freedom's lack of context as alienation and abandonment perversely echo the isolation felt by slave narrators. As Frederick Douglass recalled in 1845, "The motto which I adopted when I started from slavery was this - 'Trust no man!'" 46 In The Fugitive Blacksmith (1849), former slave James Pennington remembers his escape with ambivalence: "No consideration, not even that of life itself, could tempt to give up the thought of flight.... I now found myself... a solitary wanderer from my home and friends." 47 Notwithstanding the difference between Uncle Robin's minstrel-like complaint of a proslavery fugitive and the integrity of Douglass and Pennington, these articulations all associate freedom with what Orlando Patterson calls "social death"-a condition that severs self from kin and community.48 The staggering aspect of this conjunction between freedom and social death is that, for Patterson, alienation from family, tribe, or clan describes not freedom but slavery.

The ranks of the socially dead are populated by "permanent stranger[s]," beings cut off from kin and unattached to others.⁴⁹ The socially dead reside in the negativity of "genealogical isolation" and "natal alienation," trapped in a thin, shallow autobiographical performance lacking affiliation.⁵⁰ For the author of *Clotel*, social death makes freedom more accessible; recalling his own flight across the Mason-Dixon Line, Brown wishes to cauterize personal history with the balm of forgetfulness: "The love of a dear mother, a dear sister, and three brothers, yet living, caused me to shed many tears. If I could only have been assured of their being dead." ⁵¹ My purpose in noting an unlikely convergence between social death and freedom is not to suggest that Patterson incorrectly defines slavery as the negation of communal and familial identification. Nor is my point to question the resolve of slaves who undertook flight. Rather, the intent is to argue that antislavery as well as proslavery narratives nationalized freedom in deathlike terms. Social death tokens slavery as well as freedom because the ideological

parameters of each—unconditional and uncompromising—are the same. As estrangement, freedom echoes with the dissociation of (social) death, revealing the hostility of American political definitions to context. So expendable are the specifics that it becomes irrelevant whether one is advocating slavery or freedom; in theorizing either possibility, one indicates death.

This political necrophilia seeks to put to rest conditions that force human actors to play a political fort/da game in which historical, material, legal, and institutional circumstances restrict access to the pleasures of abstract liberty. Blackness and commodification wash away with Clotel's leap into the Potomac; memory and obligation are repressed by Bibb's deathly fantasy; a master's rights to a slave woman's child are nullified by infanticide in "The Slave Mother's Appeal"; a weary soul's earthly burden is laid aside in The Planter's Northern Bride: each event locates politics beyond the socius. The desire to return to what Freud calls "inorganic existence" is also a political longing of national dimension to acquire a subjectivity freed from the necessity of grappling with factors that impinge on an "essential" self.⁵² Freedom is then truly free of all context. Employed by persons with radically different positions in the social hierarchy such as slave and slaveholder, this nationalized vocabulary traps experiences of freedom and unfreedom in a vague lexicon that expunges signs of systemic injustice, social trauma, private anguish, or any other remainders that refuse to fit a general definition.

Strategies of Antifreedom

A few extraordinary cultural documents, however, avoid freedom's compulsive ideology by refusing to theorize political subjectivity. Two works that I have in mind—Emerson's "On Freedom," specifically the final line, and Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855)—practice a strategy of thinking against freedom. As Gayatri Spivak explains, "Strategy' is an embattled concept-metaphor and unlike 'theory,' its antecedents are not disinterested and universal." ⁵³ Strategy entails contentious understandings because it owns up to memories and experiences that challenge freedom's ability to reproduce itself without regard to social practice or historical context. Unlike theory, which ab-

hors the ceaseless flux of political fort/da, strategy acknowledges material constraints such as racial and economic abjection that counter freedom, making it finite, a thing of this world. Strategy burdens freedom with encumbrances, accidents, and failures that thwart its sublimity.

"On Freedom" cunningly captures this sense of embattlement as the bulk of the poem details a theoretical climb after an unreachable liberty. Yet the last line resists pure contemplation. Responding to the gnomic question, "Freedom's secret would'st thou know?" the poet offers a concrete answer that begins to flesh out political subjectivity. Freedom consists not in knowing but in the sensuousness of doing: "Right thou feelst rashly do" is the prescription for gaining this intimate knowledge. He qualifies this action, noting that it must occur "rashly," before it becomes hermetic and is abstracted as nonexperiential, self-evident truth. Emerson breaks with a theory of freedom, and instead offers a strategy responsive to context, emerging from passions of the local and momentary. His convoluted syntax, stating that citizens must impetuously act on latent convictions in order to conceive freedom, leads to a semantics of culture because this action demands contact with an external materiality. No longer isomorphically defined, freedom ceases to be both immanent and imminent. It is instead deferred, awaiting the human actor's participation in culture.

"Right thou feelst rashly do" — these five words enigmatically strung together, rather than conclude Emerson's ode, disrupt the contemplative cast of the preceding lines. For the citizen who "would'st know" the essence of freedom, knowing must be forsaken in preference to the uncertain results of doing. Praxis works against poetic notions of politics by enmeshing the citizen in an unavoidable contingency. As Bonnie Honig argues, freedom belongs in "the contingent world of action"; thus dislocated from the inflexible identity of a national citizen, politics emerges, not in the formal rights of a legal self but in connection to material existence.⁵⁴ Emerson's brief though suggestive departure from nationalized definitions signals an incipient attempt to reanimate political life with definitions that respond to, rather than sublimate, historical context. But the poet stops short, lounging in the comfort of a hypothetical posture that hesitates to consider exactly how sensuous commitment to action will flesh out a liberatory agenda.

More aggressive thinking against freedom motivates My Bondage

and My Freedom. Offering a more practical, experiential narrative than Emerson, Douglass agitates for liberation by relentlessly critiquing freedom, ultimately proposing that the subject needs to withstand noncontingent politics. No doubt this strategy is mined with crippling irony, placing the former slave in the position of narrating a story that dismisses the value of traditional U.S. liberty. Douglass, however, assails such freedom without sacrificing a position committed to human emancipation. My Bondage and My Freedom instigates a strategy of *anti*freedom to speak against the theoretical imperatives and abstraction of a nationalized vocabulary. To understand how an argument against freedom does not necessarily participate in a repressive apparatus but in fact furthers an emancipatory agenda, it is first essential to examine how freedom depoliticizes persons by deeming so many elements of subjectivity - memory, racial heritage, bodily experience-as irrelevant to citizenship. Marx's richly disturbing essay, "On the Jewish Question," can help accomplish this goal.

While acquisition of rights such as freedom of the press and religion encouraged his contemporaries to take heart in the pace of political emancipation, Marx pauses before this celebration, preferring instead to contest the desirability of political emancipation in the first place. Emancipation, according to Marx, involves dismemberment: political elements interwoven and diffused throughout social relations are cut out of daily existence and then abstracted as fundamental universal rights, protected and guaranteed by the state. The investment of liberty, in this way, actually divests liberty from usages that texture political experience at the level of the everyday. Bourgeois emancipation desubstantializes freedom by identifying elements of "species being" deemed to have political worth, and extirpating these aspects from their textured and highly mediated position in culture. The state founds rights by depoliticizing culture. A "formally free and equal human being" emerges, writes Wendy Brown in her reading of Marx's essay, only to be "practically resubjugated" in ways that disavow "the material constituents of personhood." 55 The pursuit after freedom is also a flight from any factors that force consideration of citizenship as a historical and contextual category.

As a revolutionary technology, liberal contractarian society depoliticizes culture by subsuming specific activities of the popular under the formal workings and abstract protections of the state. The modern

state, observes Marx, "abolished the political character of civil society," once rich in variegated and meaningful political forms and practicessuch as guilds, corporations, and privileges-now decreed as nonpolitical by the state. Freedom liberates the subject from spheres of social and civil action, abandoning the citizen to the few rights (freedom of the press, religion, and speech) guaranteed by political society. The timeless, unabridgeable aura surrounding these rights removes the citizen from the arena of fort/da; promise of a few liberties encourages the subject to extricate her- or himself from contexts crisscrossed by messy and often temporary incarnations of the political. Uncompromised by everyday entanglements, the subject becomes historically lightweight and ancestrally unmarked, ready for interpellation within the general frame of rights as a citizen. In effect, political emancipation shuns culture. The state does not so much embody liberty in the people as it disembodies persons by creating the citizen as an abstract entity with a political existence separate from the "material and cultural elements which formed the life experience and civil situation of these individuals." 56 The state forges the citizen by stripping away the skin to expose a legal person. Discarded are the sediments of memory, the everyday, and belonging-all the semantic wealth that makes the subject excessive to the citizen, all the frustrating specificity that stands in the way of bourgeois universality.

Sight of this eviscerated subject, starved of history and culture, provokes questions about the desirability of political emancipation. The "Jewish Question" responds by telling an ambivalent story of freedom. Once upon a time, as it were, the creation of the bourgeois state

set free the political spirit which had, so to speak, been dissolved, fragmented and lost in the various culs-de-sac of feudal society; it reassembled these scattered fragments, liberated the political spirit from its connexion with civil life and made of it the community sphere, the *general* concern of the people, in principle independent of these particular elements of civil life. A *specific* activity and situation in life no longer had any but an individual significance.⁵⁷

At first glance, this passage valorizes the transition from feudal to civil society. Freedom depends on a unifying "spirit" that offers the citizen a distinct political realm that had been previously lacking. But in carving out a separate sphere, in reassembling the diffuse activities of

quotidian life into durable structures, the subject is inevitably carved up as well, forcibly extracted from a material public sphere, where in the numerous moments it touched on the subject's body, politics appeared. Intimate and perishable moments would hardly qualify under a nationalized vocabulary as political. Embedded in the mundane and particular, such instances fall short of the abstract generality made available by citizenship. The narrative of political investment is also one of loss: the state "set free" the subject, but it left him or her deserted, too. Citizenship is saturated with necrophilic longing: the birth of the political individual signals the death of a "species being." Freedom enforces the reduction of human subjectivity to formal personhood; citizenship streamlines the subject to an efficient mechanism of the nation-state.

The freedom that emerges by emancipating politics from the gamut of human subjectivity allows the state to jettison social remainders that make ontology anything more evocative than the formalities of legal syntax. To be free, as Webster's *American Dictionary* defines it, means "not to be encumbered with," not to be weighted down by the semantic components—embodiment, local contexts, and historical conditions—of being. Freedom mobilizes citizenship, forging a nationalized vocabulary that privileges word over flesh and exalts utopia over history.

Blacks and Jews

Because slavery intrudes on Webster's definition of freedom, because social interpretations encroach on Clotel's identity, because the institutionality of maternal reproduction affixes itself to Bibb's daughter, in short, because context disrupts unfettered subjectivity, white citizens and black noncitizens consented to a necro ideology that theorized freedom as an eternal value. Their abstract political definitions emerged from (the repression of) material conditions: the urge to theorize freedom as posthistorical and postpolitical originates in an aversion to the messy antecedents and heterogeneous claims of democratic life. For Douglass, in contrast, noncontextual definitions leave freedom without meaning. "The dictionary afforded me little help," remembers Douglass when he sought to understand the word *aboli*- *tion* and its connection to emancipation. He learns that *abolition* is "the act of abolishing'; but it [the dictionary definition] left me in ignorance at the very point where I most wanted information—and that was, as to the *thing* to be abolished." ⁵⁸ Dissatisfied with a tautological lack of reference, he desires context. Much as Douglass begins to discern the significance of *abolition* through the guarded and bitter tones of Southerners who speak the word, *My Bondage and My Freedom* investigates freedom by examining its cultural accents and historical inflections.

Like its 1845 prototype, Douglass's second autobiography at times pursues universals, searching for "that freedom, which . . . I had ascertained to be the natural and inborn right of every member of the human family" (273). But My Bondage and My Freedom also opposes this ideology of freedom, contesting its naturalness and innateness by encumbering the slave and freeman's story with an awareness of the history that makes freedom seem "natural" and the material conditions that make it seem "inborn." Ten years later, Douglass adds more narrative to his Narrative: an accretion of detail and circumstance not found in his 1845 slave autobiography glom onto freedom, relocating foundational "truths" in a language whose grammar is conditional, definitions contingent, and meanings semantic.⁵⁹ With tactical awareness of his situation, Douglass thinks against freedom to recover memories that supply once repressed context to political definitions. He offers a strategy in which embattled concepts take precedence over abstractions.

Even though the black abolitionist James McCune Smith prefaced *My Bondage and My Freedom* with praise for its "abstract logic, of human equality," Douglass implicitly discouraged such conclusive assessments by exceeding prior definitions of freedom, including those he advances in both the *Narrative* and its 1855 revision. As he opens the final chapter of his expanded autobiography, he announces: "I have now given the reader an imperfect sketch of nine years' experience in freedom" (392). Although this pose of humility at first seems an apology for his own rhetorical skills, it is more precisely "freedom" and his "experience" of it that are "imperfect." He hedges on freedom because to do otherwise, to claim full freedom—whatever that is—would be to disdain the material conditions that circumscribe African American existence. An exhaustively defined freedom would for-

get violations that mark body and consciousness. Supplementing his 1845 celebration of free labor in the North, the section titled "Life as a Freeman" records incident after incident in which "American prejudice against color" obstructs workable conceptions of freedom (398). While New Bedford, Massachusetts, appears wondrously sober and industrious to the newly escaped fugitive, a decade later the scene lacks such sublimity: "Here in New Bedford, it was my good fortune to see a pretty near approach to freedom on the part of the colored people" (346–47). Syntactically, Douglass is a free man, but semantically, ejection from railway cars, expulsion from churches, and separation from family members and friends muddle this vocabulary. Whereas Emerson's "American Scholar" heralds a freedom independent of referentiality, Douglass proposes a culturally material primer, where meaning is never absolute but always subject to revision, contradiction, and antithesis.

Douglass quite literally modifies the vocabulary of freedom. My Bondage and My Freedom does not invoke a simple freedom but rather speaks more complexly of "partial freedom," "half-freedom," an "approach to freedom," and "comparative freedom" (330, 346, xx, 247). Such linguistic couplings estrange the word from Emerson's comfortable isomorphism. Douglass's description of comparative freedom refutes noncontingent notions of subjectivity at the heart of antebellum discourse-of which his Narrative is a prime example. In 1845, Douglass cast his two-hour battle with the "slave breaker" Covey as an epiphany: "It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom" (83). Revisiting this episode of heroic resistance in My Bondage and My Freedom, he simultaneously expands and scales back his earlier declaration: "It was a resurrection from the dark and pestiferous tomb of slavery, to the heaven of comparative freedom" (247). The added words do not complete the episode but supplement it. These modifications extend the chain of reference, imbuing Douglass's experience with a "comparative" aspect, wresting freedom from verbal autonomy and placing it at the site of a relational conjuncture. The political necrophilia that promises an absolute politics by paralleling freedom to the "tomb of slavery" holds no attraction for Douglass; but this stance does not commit him to a politics of forgetting, either. Freedom retains its links to the prior history of slavery's social death, acquiring significance only through reference to what

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comes before—in this case, both the words of the sentence and the portion of his life that they encapsulate. "Freedom" in 1845 merely proceeds upward, but by 1855, its ascent remains bound to a slave past and, in fact, only has meaning beyond the vagueness of evangelical metaphor through a historical comparison shaped by the two distinct stages in Douglass's life. "Heaven" remains tied to the "tomb": in place of liberating deaths that annihilate body and context in proslavery and antislavery writing, *My Bondage and My Freedom* proposes a subjectivity where rebirth never fully sheds residues of antecedence.

This persistent modification undermines the articulation of politics as a discourse independent of culture. In My Bondage and My Freedom, circumstances of race, gender, and class accent the ex-slave's struggle so that he can never declare liberty in universalist tones that have no debt to social considerations. Douglass, moreover, does not desire access to the freedom shared by proslavery and antislavery writers because its absolute quality offers little distinction from the nonconditionality that structures power on the plantation. For the slaveholding class, one maxim governs all situations: "Everything must be absolute here" (121). This iron principle explains the conduct of overseers who administer correction to slaves without regard for circumstance or consequence. The guilt or innocence of the accused offender is irrelevant; all that matters is the arbitrariness of the overseer's will to justice. It is this insistence on the absolute that legitimates the brutal treatment of black bodies, specifically an overseer's murder of the slave Denby. Refusing to be whipped for some unnamed infraction, Denby challenges the white man's authority to wield total control. The overseer responds, however, with the absolute nature of death, and shoots Denby in the head, justifying his action by appealing to a nationalized necrophilia that couples the practice of slavery and social death with the logic of freedom:

He argued, that if one slave refused to be corrected, and was allowed to escape with his life, when he had been told that he should lose it if he persisted in his course, the other slaves would copy his example; the result of which would be, the freedom of the slaves, and the enslavement of the whites. (123–24)

On the plantation, political stakes are absolute, the outcomes final and noncontingent. Personal desire or distaste—such as Denby's aver-

sion to a "few stripes"—are idiosyncratic impediments to an agenda that views anomalous wants, accidents of the flesh, and private pleas for justice as inimical to the search for undiluted political value. Proslavery and antislavery narratives equally pursue a deathlike freedom, not because they agree on the content of emancipated subjectivity but because they agree that a truly free subjectivity has no content. Narrative thins to an unsedimented, unconditional schema that seems democratic because it is a story so general as to apply to all.

The overseer's theory of power does not have a merely Southern accent; Gore adheres to a national sensibility in which freedom and slavery do not exist as relational or historical concepts. Douglass's talk about comparative freedom, in contrast, prepares a nonnational subjectivity, forfeiting any claim to an abstract, state-recognized identity. As political critique, My Bondage and My Freedom does not define freedom beyond ideology but rather, like Marx's "On the Jewish Question," uncovers historical antecedents and material conditions that make freedom ideological. Each is an archaeology of emancipation to reveal the destructiveness of abstracting persons from relations textured by memory, obligation, and belonging. For Marx, freedom once equated with the "right of the circumscribed individual, withdrawn into himself [sic]" decimates "the relations between man and man."60 Similarly, for Douglass in My Bondage and My Freedom, freedom entails the loss of familiar and intimate associations: as he says of his escape to the North, "I was not only free from slavery, but I was free from home as well. The reader will see that I had something more than the simple fact of being free to think of" (340). Both Marx and Douglass counteract the depoliticizing effects of freedom by offering strategies that resediment the subject in an environment susceptible to accident, change, and contingency. What they seek is a strategy of freedom-as opposed to a theory-that refuses to experience alienation at the core of emancipation.

Specifics, although they puncture the insularity of general descriptions, lead to increasingly democratic practices. After lamenting the processes by which the abstract logic of bourgeois emancipation erodes "the community sphere," Marx calls for a materially specific analysis that recognizes "everyday life" as concomitant with political power. "On the Jewish Question" endeavors to dignify everyday life, but it is precisely at this point that the argument takes a disturbing

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turn. The "*everyday Jew*" concretizes for Marx the mystified workings of capital: critical analysis of systemic abuses acquires a specific thrust by targeting Jewish culture. The insight that the bourgeois economy produces alienation mutates into demonizations of Jewish "huckstering."⁶¹ Economic critique doubles as anti-semitism because the essay's latter portion revolves around a pun using the German *Judentum*, meaning Judaism but also commerce.⁶² Capitalism becomes reified as a set of practices embodied in a minority population. Resistance to political abstraction leads Marx to reorient being in specific relations—and he does so with a vengeance, savaging what he takes to be practices particular to Jewish communities. The fight against alienation laces everyday life with the venom of prejudice.

The problem of Marx's anti-semitism implies the former slave's difficulty in specifying an antifreedom without making himself or his brethren racial targets. Considerable hesitation surrounds the effort to flesh out political subjectivity for a man whose flesh had been subject to commodification and abuse. On his arrival in the North, the climate of philanthropic, liberal reform seems to provide a haven, offering the fugitive a nonparticular identity that overcomes the particulars associated with servitude. Among the "ranks of freedom's friends," Douglass writes in My Bondage and My Freedom, "I was made to forget that my skin was dark and my hair crisped" (360). In language reminiscent of the ironic defense of blacks in Frank Freeman's Barber Shop where characters with "crisped and matted hair" are killed off by antislavery authors, Douglass implies that ascription to an abstract humanity entails compulsion: in being "made to forget" his racial heritage, he hints at how national rights impinge on free subjects. He remembers a forced forgetting of racial detail; he documents a freedom that alienates and momentarily annihilates nonwhite, nongeneric African aspects of his corporeality and personal history. This equivocation registers the danger of insisting on an embodied subjectivity when the body suffers demeaning interpretations. As My Bondage and My Freedom charges, white abolitionists played up the corporeality of the slave narrator's being, introducing Douglass as a "thing" with a history of bondage "written on my back" in order to impress on audiences the harsh reality of the peculiar institution (360, 359). Like Marx who personifies capitalism in the body of the Jew, abolitionists use Douglass to embody a system that remained for many Northerners

vague and remote. While the reminders of the flesh lead abolitionists to condescending universalism, Douglass finds impoverishing a general existence that rises above semantic, culturally resonant details that texture his own lost memories. No less than nine times in the space of two pages, the refrain "*We don't allow niggers in here*" is repeated as Douglass tries to enter churches, zoos, lecture halls, and restaurants (371–73). Despite an initial optimism, then, Northern racism forces Douglass's admission that "my enthusiasm had been extravagant" in ever thinking that he could claim the generic identity of a citizen as white men do (360).

The abstract thinking of abolitionists, however enlightened, foists amnesia on the fugitive slave, insisting that he forget his mother's legacy and African heritage. A specific existence is no more encouraging: U.S. society fixates on racial inheritance in order to deny Douglass the rights accorded to citizens blessed with complexions that seemingly have no history. Douglass responds by thinking against freedom, making its theoretical promises contingent on historical delimitations that circumscribe African American subjectivity. *My Bondage and My Freedom* translates a nationalized vocabulary into a set of particulars in ways that significantly reaccent liberty and citizenship. Still, like so many of his generation, Douglass invokes a common, deathly topos:

Patrick Henry, to a listening senate, thrilled by his magic eloquence, and ready to stand by him in his boldest flights, could say, "GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH," and this saying was a sublime one, even for a freeman; but, incomparably more sublime, is the same sentiment, when *practically* asserted by men [*sic*] accustomed to the lash and chain men whose sensibilities must have become more or less deadened by their bondage. (284)

Reiteration of this patriotic articulation does not transmogrify politics as a spectral retreat from social existence, as in proslavery and antislavery visions of emancipation. Unlike necrophilic invocations of liberty that promote aversion to embodied subjectivity in conjunction with a desire for an unchanging subject, Douglass links these words to the institutional context that housed his own body. He "*practically*" resituates freedom amid the materiality of "the lash and chain," not simply to ironize founding principles but also to embed political concepts in a lived history of enslavement. His narrative burdens freedom

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with antecedence: whereas Henry's enthusiasm encourages "flights" of political imagination, the practicality of the former slave's memory returns to constraints of law and custom. His version of freedom is "more sublime," but not because it represents a higher theoretical clime. Rather, Douglass's opposition of liberty and death reverses the trajectory of the patriotic sublime, descending to grasp remainders that exceed standard political formulas. A semantic liberty emerges from a world of degraded "sensibilities," from a band of conspirators who gauge political action not by recourse to abstractions but by embracing their own difficult embodiment under slavery.

Douglass thinks against freedom, tethering it to cultural and institutional remainders so often judged excessive to political language and theory. To think against freedom is to refuse the depoliticization that is at the heart of naturalized national rights. To think against freedom is to remember the very bodies alienated and abused by slavery. In contrast to the range of "American scholars" including abolitionists, slave narrators, and proslavery pastoralists who propose definitions independent of precedent and culture, Douglass asks us to make sense of political rights by context. Freedom is to be construed by all that surrounds it rather than being instantly divined by its meaning. Political literacy is thus as slow and laborious as the slave's struggle to read and write: to become fluent in freedom, the citizen needs to think about what freedom is not in at least two respects. First, action against freedom requires archaeological practices - a sort of material etymology of culture — that link present use to past abuse, that reconnect a grammar of citizenship to the difficult semantics of social death. Second, a strategic position against freedom commits us to modes of political being that are remaindered by nationalized rights. To think what freedom is not, then, asks for more than a remembering of slavery; it also asks us to document and imagine all the experiences and expressions not recognized as or included in freedom. Resistance to freedom forces on us the difficult awareness of the violence that freed the citizen from everyday life.



WHITE MALE SEXUALITY, SELF-RELIANCE,

AND BONDAGE

In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself . . . happy enough if he can satisfy himself alone. — Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"

The social contract in the United States, so often a consensual death pact forced on racially embodied subjects, boomeranged to hit the white male citizen. But because the cultural transparency of whiteness and maleness defied the vengeful aim of abstract citizenship, it was the specificity of the citizen's sexuality that came under ideological fire. Within recriminatory operations of the social contract, the slippage from enslaved black body to oversexualized white male body results from a prior slippage inherent to the social contract, one that toggles uneasily between the subject's physical body and the more amorphous collective grouping of subjects, the body politic. Consent has long pivoted on the interplay of corporeal and abstract bodies: as a well-known bit of political theory puts it, "For when any number of men [sic] have, by the consent of every individual, made a *community*, they have thereby made that *community* one body, with a Power to Act as one Body."1 John Locke's "one body" from his Second Treatise of Government (1690) was never black or female — otherwise how could it attain broadly representative status? But what happened when that one body

became culturally particular, when, for instance, the transparency of white men became libidinally bound to castigated representations of blackness?

In energetic and popular arenas of moral reform, anxiety over citizens' sexual behavior occasioned pathological references to bondage and slavery. As white men surrendered to carnal impulses and lost control of their bodily flows, they became slaves. Such sensational conclusions were standard fare in a nineteenth-century rhetorical universe where self-reliance as a corporeal principle became a national concern. At stake was an issue far greater than the liberties that young men were taking with their bodies: for if the physical body, in all its cultural invisibility as white and male, provided a template for the republic, did the spectacle of sexually degraded white men also suggest the collective body's lack of political virtue? Far from signaling a breakdown of the body's potential to analogize the U.S. body politic, the representational slide from Southern bondage to white corporeality is of tremendous national use. The "natural" body-especially in "aberrant" manifestations that violate ethical, hygienic, and democratic codes broadly classed under the dictum of self-reliance-is an enabling construction that allows white men to concentrate on disruptions in their own bodies while overlooking disruption in the body politic.

As convenient shorthand for the liberal state's hoped-for cohesion and order, Locke's one body entails a linguistic misrecognition: movement from the citizen's body to civic body depends on the trope of catachresis, which unequally employs a word or phrase (in this case, "one body") to express something (a consolidated "community" of diverse bodies) that it does not properly denote. The inequality of catachresis that reads the white male's private body as the public's collective one cooperates with political inequality by misrepresenting the scope and character of African American servitude. Much as catachresis indicates linguistic abuse, liberal reformers participated in a political distortion by talking about the body as though it had the same valence as the body politic.² Equipped with a catachrestic sensibility that (mis)understood the citizen's sexuality via national policies on race, a wide range of cultural critics including medical crusaders, abolitionists, educators, and transcendentalists reconceived the abstract body politic in fairly specific, highly personal, and ultimately privatizing

terms. As an analogy for certain sexual behaviors, slavery plainly suggested the dire consequences of improper corporeal conduct. More obliquely, however, this analogy proved culturally satisfying because of its discursive ability to recast improper political behavior as nonsystemic and private—in short, as a lapse in sexual conduct.

This chapter examines moments of crisis when politics and ideology move back and forth between the metaphoric body of the national community and the actual body of the citizen. Writing about the popular rhetoric of the male purity movement, cultural historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg discerns an inability to control the critical force of the conjunction between body and body politic: "The physical body serves as both microcosm and counterpoint to the body of social structure and social arrangements. The physical body, while symbolizing the social body, at the same time incorporates carnal demands that threaten to disrupt—soil—the purity of the allegorical body."³ The unchecked refiguration of abstract body politic as white male sexual body argues for the need to modify the ways of critiquing citizenship. Theorists of race and gender have drawn attention to how the "universal" parameters of generic personhood legitimized white propertied males while barring others (for example, minority populations, women, and slaves) from the social contract. Only subjects whose propertied whiteness and maleness freed them from corporeality secured the disembodiment necessary to enter the body politic. By asking "whose body it is that is entitled to be represented by this political corporation," critics have marked the exclusionary effects of a metonymic exchange between body and body politic. Yet to read this exclusion as characteristic of a "political vocabulary" that "will not tolerate an embodied speech" is to overlook moments when the body politic is obsessively embodied as white and male.⁴ Critical perspectives on citizenship tend to overstate the social body as an abstract entity. When the body politic suffers severe ideological contradictions, a less systemic and more easily privatized body may do the trick of disavowing social and political fractures. "America" is thus not always an abstract corporation; it is also an overembodied subject whose specific symptoms take precedence over national disarticulation. And what could better disavow complex national issues than for the white male body's most intimate and nonpublic habits to become lodged at the center of concerns over citizenship?

The Black Man

Talk about sexuality, as Michel Foucault maintains, is sanctioned and encouraged by moral, scientific, and juridical authorities. Modernity is typified by incitements to confess, study, and speak openly about sex. Foucault's contention that "there was a steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex" is borne out in the nineteenth-century United States where reformers, educators, and clergy saturated the public sphere with anxious talk about male orgasm, erections, and semen, as well as masturbation.⁵ The conversion of sex into discourse prepares an array of technologies that track bodies to their most intimate recesses. The phobic concern for white male sexuality that heats up in the 1830s appeals to all sorts of medical authorities and quacks along with the most efficient wielder of power, the self-surveilling subject. But the U.S. discourse on the somatic citizen involves two technologies—evasion and displacement—that do not appear in Foucault's hypotheses about a racially homogeneous society. Sexuality also manages race matters: when the citizen's body loses its transparency and comes under the scrutiny of moral rhetoric and hygienic investigation, it overshadows the cleavages caused by national policies of racial bondage. The deployment of white male chastity restrains a democracy, which to the dismay of many citizens, particularly those alarmed by the divisive rhetoric, mobs, and protests associated with the slavery crisis, seemed at risk from an overload of political excitement.

Explicit talk of seminal weakness, nocturnal emissions, and the enervating consequences of male orgasm was not simply directed at freeing citizens from the enslaving passions of unbridled sexuality. More significantly, it liberated democratic discourse from racial contradictions by highlighting and then suppressing the extent to which whiteness, masculinity, and liberty are cathected to unfree black bodies. Whiteness, according to anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler, demands a "racially erotic counterpoint."⁶ As effective as Puritan legacies and Victorianism in the United States were in targeting corporeal practices and habits, the regulation of white sexuality was equally instrumental in evading nationally divisive anxieties about institutional practice and exploitation. Citizens north and south may have disagreed about race slavery, but they all shared the same vulnerability to sexual slavery.

Civilized bourgeois bodies are libidinally indebted to the category of the "savage," argues Stoler in her study of European families living in colonial Java. Likewise in a much earlier "study" of one European family living in colonial America, Hawthorne suggests the racial dynamics of white sexuality, but his claim is less straightforward, built on symbolic overdeterminations that both confront and disavow race. The heroine of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) explains her carnal sin in the following terms: "Once in my life I met the Black Man. . . . This scarlet letter is his mark!"7 Yes, Hester Prynne penitently links her transgression to blackness, yet her acknowledgment also construes the historical presence of the black man in North America simply as her private moral crisis. To be fair, the "Black Man" here is not a person but an allegorical personage, and Hester's white sexuality is not male. Neither is Hawthorne's romance, despite its publication at the height of heated compromise debates on slavery, an analysis of race in the United States. The individualization and privatization of blackness as Hester's sin itself exemplifies the ideological bad faith of the liberal United States: racial injustice and oppression are refracted through the crucible of white sexuality so that citizens can avoid coming to terms with the need for pervasive cultural critique.

Inaccurate homologies between body and body politic enable disavowals such as Hester's. Of course, the figure of the body politic is itself a founding catachresis of social contract theory, one that Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651) found particularly useful both in explaining and mystifying the subject's consent to the aggregate power of state institutions. Convinced that civilization had advanced beyond distrust of a disorganized and uncoordinated populace that led Hobbes to relocate political authority in a single representative, U.S. reformers sought to undo the catachresis of the body politic and restore authority to individual bodies. Emerson, contributing to this democratic impulse, proclaimed the "age of the first person singular," envisioning a multitude of political bodies, each significant in its apartness from both the institutions and trope of the body politic.8 But this reformist impulse entailed yet another catachresis: returning political power to the human body recast structural conditions as questions of individual desire and governance. As with all moments

of catachresis, the result is a misnaming that in the moment that is the slaveholding United States, confused private habits and proclivities of the individual body—drunkenness, gambling, corset wearing, erotic daydreaming, idleness, and masturbation—with institutional oppressions perpetrated by the body politic.

Although this last practice incurs censure as a barren act, the abundance of antionanist warnings in the literature of physiology, transcendental reform, civic conduct, and domestic advice reveal that masturbation-as a discursive site-was incredibly fertile. Breeding fears about the unsupervised habits of solitary citizens, the discourse against masturbation conflicts with agendas of self-culture that encouraged young men to discard allegiances to dead institutions and live according to the rhythms of natural law, as Thoreau did at Walden. "We are refreshed by quitting the impracticable mass for the solitary soul," stated Emerson in his 1837 lecture, "The Individual." Edifying words, to be sure-but dangerous advice that could lead youth to physical ruination and depravity: pamphlets designed for detection and home treatment of the "self-fornicator" repeatedly identified seclusion as both cause and symptom of masturbation.¹⁰ "Children who are addicted to such habits, like to be in solitary places, where they can indulge their vicious propensities," wrote Philadelphia surgeon George Calhoun. "They like to sleep late in the morning," he continued, "and nevertheless feel unrefreshed and heavy on getting up."11 The question of whether or not the self was left "refreshed" or "unrefreshed" by individualism resonated with concerns about the health of the republic, particularly the role that structural critique should play in thinking about the nation.

Denunciations of autoerotic enjoyment provided political pleasure by suggesting that systemic attention to U.S. institutions was not only unnecessary but misguided. Subjected to the "bondage of one's own lusts," the figure of the individual as masturbator encouraged reformers to urge social reform at the level of the physical body, not the body politic.¹² This strategy, Emerson observed, refreshed the citizen struggling to square unfreedom, rapacity, and death with democracy: "A man [*sic*] may not be able to reconcile slavery, piracy, disease, which affect thousands, with the good of the whole, but in his own experience, however hard, he finds no stumbling block."¹³ Privatization responds to anxieties that pervasive social problems—like Emerson's

understanding of slavery as a macroscopic ill—are far too complex to remedy. This attitude becomes doctrinal with the slogan of selfreliance, which as it spread from Emerson's lectern to other sites of reform, acquired corporeal dimension. Emerson's philosophy, reworked as physiology, identifies not the individual but the body as an index of political culture and republican health. Suspicions about the "selfreliance" of joint-stock companies and other collective bodies were shared generally by Northern liberals, who distrusted institutions to such an extent that some abolitionists were worried that antislavery organizations degraded individual freedom. As scholars like Stanley Elkins have noted, reformist efforts were suffused with a "strongly anti-institutional, antiformal, and individualistic" sensibility that allowed activists to construe slavery not as a "social problem but a moral abstraction."¹⁴

How secure are the links between sexuality, Jacksonian reform, and an anti-institutional sense of whiteness? Transcendentalists are not foremost hygienic crusaders, and the concern for self-reliance seems miles away from an anxiety over spermatorrhea or similar lack of seminal control. Nor do Emerson and self-appointed authorities interested in male orgasm-such as William Alcott, Sylvester Graham, and Orson Fowler-belong to some unitary class of "white men." But even as these men occupied different strata in the public sphere, they shared antisystemic assumptions that made Emerson's abstractions familiar to proponents of bodily perfection and, at the same moment, allowed popular ethics of self-culture to filter up to Emerson's consciousness. This dialectical relation between an elite man-ofletters and popular culture underwrites Emerson's "halfway democracy," which as Christopher Newfield argues, locates freedom in a notion of personality already patterned by authoritarianism and obedience to the law.¹⁵ This law was often hygienic, its authority experienced in the intimate conduct of the citizen's body. Taking specific shape in the regulatory discourse on white male sexual desire, this personal subject of halfway democracy substituted for the corporate political body of democracy and, in the process, emptied reformist discourse of historicist attention to systemic racial inequities.

However much hygienic lecturers and antislavery activists spoke of emancipation from sinful bondage in different senses, their language nonetheless converged around prevailing meanings of freedom

as grounded in privacy, depoliticization, and social disengagement. This willingness to emblematize the private, corporeal self constitutes a retrograde rhetorical strategy in which the language used to describe states of unfreedom becomes dehistoricized and narrowed to the confines of self. It is a narrowing exemplified in a letter from an anonymous minister who took part in reformist fervor by alerting a prominent homeopathic journal about what he perceived to be a serious decline of independence in his New England village. In desperate tones, he consulted The Library of Health for advice: "Now, sir, I ask what can be done which shall enable us, with the blessing of Almighty God, to redeem our fellow men from the fearful bondage to which I allude?" To verify the pervasiveness of a bondage he could not name, this minister, acting as an antebellum Senator McCarthy, declared, "Now, Mr. Editor, I hold in my hand a list of names, dates, and facts, showing incontestably that from a church of 250 members," an alarming number suffer from "the loss of good feeling and good fellowship." Communitas is threatened by a "bondage" that the pastor could only name euphemistically as the "awful effects of the 'solitary vice'" among his congregation.¹⁶ What remains unspoken is the word masturbation; what speaks volumes in this evasion is a significant anxiety about a putatively degenerative compulsion that drained men of the self-reliance necessary for democratic fraternity.

Physiological impurity echoes with fears of political corruption, specifically the republic's toleration, support, and practice of racial bondage. Because health reform contains messages about antislavery reform, hygienic tracts reveal how the corporeal individual both served as a site of sexual regulation and regulated political discourse. A national policy of racism that pollutes the body politic reappears as the "disease" of the self-polluted body. *The Library of Health* picked up on this catachrestic logic in its response to the minister's fears by conflating physical body and national culture:

The public mind is, at the present time, all excitement about slavery the slavery of two or three millions of our fellow men [sic], by a nation professing to love and regard personal liberty beyond any nation on the globe. And why should it not be so?... Yet admitting it to be much more dreadful than it is, what is this sort of slavery compared with the slavery of man to himself, or rather, to his own appetites and lusts? And what

is freedom, dear as in itself it truly is, to those who are carried captives by Satan at his will; who bow down their necks to the yoke of passion, fashion, appetite; and even rejoice in their own bondage?¹⁷

Even as this rhetoric equates masturbation and slavery, it establishes a hierarchy of oppression, deeming slavery to the self more grievous than the enslavement of blacks. The inequality of this metaphor exposes the workings of power when cultural critique is rendered at the level of the body: in an ironic reversal, the reformer charges that institutional injustice occupies too limited a horizon, and instead emphasizes the need for regeneration at the "universal" level of the white male body. Like Emerson, who found it easier, even refreshing, to privatize the self's moral qualms over "slavery, piracy, disease" than to understand the structural origins of social ills, Northern liberals preferred to conceive of slavery as a private abuse of the individual body.

Self-Abuse or Self-Reliance?

Although Samuel Tissot's *On Onania* (1758) proves that highly elaborated European ideas about "self-pollution" preceded such preoccupations in the United States by at least seventy years, the masturbation phobia that burst on the U.S. reform movement in the 1830s and lasted through the turn of the century was no sterile echo of continental models. Much as the literary figures of Young America sought to create works indebted neither to French, German, or English novels, U.S. reformers, while influenced by Tissot and other European authorities, produced medical studies, hygienic pamphlets, and conduct books warning of the "solitary vice" emerging from concerns peculiar to the slaveholding republic.¹⁸ To stylize masturbators as "slave[s] of sexual lust," "wretched slaves of the abominable habit," "slaves of lascivious thoughts and practices," and "slaves to their own corrupt passions" was to employ nativist accents of U.S. institutional life to construct a discourse on sexuality.¹⁹

The nineteenth-century pathology of masturbation resounds with the contradictions of democracy. An array of terms to denote masturbation—"solitary vice," "self-indulgence," "self-destruction," "selfprostitution," "self-fornication," "self-abuse," "self-pollution"—ad-

umbrated the pitfalls of celebrating individual liberty in a climate where the political infects the sexual. Yet this same vocabulary promised a cure: moral and health authorities agreed that deliverance from masturbation could be achieved only through "self-respect," "selfdenial," "self-government," "self-emancipation," and of course, "selfreliance." 20 All aspects of masturbation from its indulgence to its cure encircled the self and the self only. The attention that educators, doctors, preachers, and quacks lavished on masturbation emerged not because more people were masturbating more frequently but because this phobia obliquely addressed fundamental political issues, most notably the citizen's relation to liberation and enslavement. Anxiety over what medical crusader Seth Pancoast called "solitary manipulation" reveals a rarefied political sensibility, one that had much to do with the self and little to do with the polis; what citizens discovered was that in a democracy, questions of freedom were as solitary as vice itself²¹

This democratic disease, then, would seem to shirk off contextual ligaments, existing as a singular habit practiced in isolation of others. Such a hermetic relation hardly embodies the grist of democracy, and yet it aptly expresses the contradictions of a collective body in which the most pressing national conflict was construed as an individual dilemma. Within this idiom, neither capitalist rapacity nor racist exploitation explain bondage; rather, slaves voluntarily relinquish freedom to indulge in sadomasochistic subjection. Pancoast thus put aside moral delicacy to offer the case of a French adolescent as a dramatic lesson about the seductive nature of bondage:

It is that of a young man, who, on taking a bath, indulged in Masturbation, by placing his Penis into the hole in the bottom of the tub, made for the removal of the water. The glans soon became so much swollen that he could not withdraw the Penis. His cries brought him assistance, but it was not easy to remove him from the fetters he had forged for himself.²²

The movement from "his Penis" to "the Penis" registers a process of objectification, which ironically, stems from a perverse exercise of autonomous enjoyment. Configured as a political body, the victim of self-indulgence is deemed responsible for his own degradation. This judgment resonated as well with antislavery rhetoric, which tended to blame the slave for his or her enslavement. "The slavery of man to himself"—yet another euphemism for masturbation—captures how the discourse against masturbation legitimated a vision in which the complex cipher of race both enters and drops out of the political equation.²³ Slavery as a national issue becomes bound up solely with white men. Except at this point, it is no longer a national issue but a private indiscretion.

This story of the misadventurous bather, as well as popular case studies of other inveterate masturbators, nervous and debilitated, helped citizens read slavery as a purely somatic concern. Masturbation was thought to afflict citizens with a variety of conditions, including uncontrolled seminal loss, sallow complexions, poor digestion, diminished blood supply, gonorrhea, inflammation of the optic nerve and eventual blindness, epilepsy, insanity, impotence, dulled intellectual capacity, and forgetfulness. One homeopathic journal approvingly cited a study claiming that up to five hundred "disorders" could be "traced to the constant practice of the vice alluded to and its kindred vices." ²⁴ Figure 2 shows three individuals afflicted by the "slavery of man to himself," their uselessness to the nation evident in postures of antibourgeois lassitude, feebleness, and loss of self-control. Still, these morbid symptoms provided political pleasure by inducing a masturbatory fantasy of abjection that sequestered the citizen in a public of one, quarantining him from a social order debased by a quite different enslavement of bodies.

As the once guarded sphere of white male sexuality increasingly became the topic of public lectures and cheap pamphlets, political discourse retracted to a privatized yet still strangely national space. Concerned parents searching for methods to combat physiological slavery could take their cue from the Union's response to Southern slavery. Speaking euphemistically in 1865 of "that vicious habit which is the general theme of this book," a medical researcher advised:

Again, I say, you must look this matter in the face.... So, parent, if you would rid your family of this pest, you must look after it; and you must not look with spectacles, glossed so, all over with love to your children, that you cannot see their faults. This will never do the work. Jefferson Davis, with his rebel crew, pleads to be let alone. But that is not the way the United States take to cure them of rebellion.

Here is body and soul polluted by vice, in your very household, taught



General appearance of the features through Quanism



2 Afflicted by the onset of the "solitary vice," these three individuals suffer a range of symptoms that impair virtuous citizenship. His face marked by inanition and torpidity, the specimen at the top has forfeited his independent manhood. For the candidate on the lower left, drool figures as metonym for semen. His failure to guard this precious commodity betrays a lack of self-control and loss of self-reliance. The gentleman on the lower right is a self-abuser of such habitual proportion that his optic nerve has become inflamed and blindness seems imminent. (Source: Seth Pancoast, *Onanism, Spermatorrhoea, Porneiokalogynomia-pathology: Boyhood's Perils and Manhood's Curse; an Earnest Appeal to the Young of America* [Philadelphia, Pa., 1858].)

to your innocent children by one whom you are paying to take care of them; and will you shut your eyes, and cry, there is no danger? There is danger.²⁵

In crude terms, politicized body and body politic become interchangeable. Genital insurrection and secessionist rebellion each threaten the constitution of future generations. The analogy between the Civil War and "self-pollution" argues for the need to address private vice as a public crisis. At the same time, however, the comparison embodies the nation, construing political questions somatically—in essence, privatizing national policy as the moral agenda of the bourgeois family.

Yet too much remains unexplained by saying that the human body simply replaces the body politic. Nineteenth-century discourse is not a zero-sum game where there is only so much critical energy to go around, much of it exhausted in the treatment of the physiological subject, leaving nothing for the analysis of national institutions. Rather, medical tracts, sexual conduct books, and bachelor guides of the 1830s to 1860s legitimated a political vision so severely reduced in scope that representation of the solitary vice as slavery tended not to displace slavery altogether but to obscure race as a meaningful index, depoliticizing and dehistoricizing cultural critique, stripping criticism of the very particulars that give it force and substance. If the likening of marriage or wage labor to slavery diluted outrage over African servitude, as David Brion Davis asserts, then the construction of an at-risk white sexuality enslaved to itself effected an even more drastic erasure of institutionally bound bodies.²⁶ In place of a disembodied (and deeply fractured) metaphoric entity, the nation was hyper-embodied in white men.²⁷

White men do not enjoy only abstract personhood. They also suffer a hyper-embodied existence that mitigates the ideological contradictions of the corporate national body to which they belong. Unlike the abstract person who occupies a privileged yet always collective position, the hyper-embodied white male subject never looks up long enough to recognize the aggregate or systemic determinants of his identity. Thus insulated, the subject is left free to perfect his own body—apart from all social or institutional factors that make identity anything other than an individual concern.²⁸ The culturally lifeless

and disembodied citizen described in the previous chapter fetishizes the corporeal bearing of whiteness and sexuality because these highly personalized and embodied attributes temporarily rescue white men from the abstract but tense public sphere of national belonging. What is necessary at this juncture, then, is a discursive history that excavates the political desire to reembody abstract persons and think intimately of citizens as sexually endangered subjects. This history tracks one white man—Ralph Waldo Emerson—precisely to the point where he lost control of his discourse and it was popularized in versions that Emerson himself would have hardly recognized. Emersonian selfreliance, especially in its somatic inflections, shapes nineteenthcentury emancipatory activism as an evasion of social context.

Straight National Politics

EMERSON, SYLVESTER GRAHAM, AND REPUBLICANISM

In an 1837 article on "Physiological Vice," William Alcott rescues bodies from any social context. Stirred by a similar mixture of Unitarian reform and transcendentalism as his cousins in Concord, Alcott agitated for an emancipatory movement unconcerned with national conversations about race, as though universal freedom could be attained in private:

We say much and hear much said of the slavery of two or three millions of people in these United States. And much that is said on this subject is well said. I have surveyed, to a very considerable extent, the practical enormity of this great national evil. I have not received my information at second hand; my own eyes have witnessed it. Yet I have witnessed other forms of slavery among us, whose effects are to me still more shocking; forms of slavery, too, in whose horrors twelve or fifteen, instead of two or three millions of my countrymen are involved. I allude of course to the slavery of bad physical habits; the slavery of a being made originally in the image of God, but now very generally subjected to appetite, lust, and passion. In this view, I feel justified in saying that some of the worst forms of slavery with which I am acquainted, exist around us in our own goodly New England, as well as elsewhere; yes, in the proud city of Boston itself.²⁹

Hygiene and self-culture masquerade as democratic practice by intimating that masturbation and other "bad physical habits" demand reform more than slavery because a greater portion of the populace is at risk. Racial bondage afflicts an appalling number of people, but ultimately race, in Alcott's terms, becomes a restrictive category of analysis when compared to "still more shocking" and pervasive forms of slavery. African servitude exists only as a regional phenomenon while "physiological vice" knows no sectionalism, tainting lands that once basked in the deepest legacies of freedom. Self-emancipation demands the same demeanor as Emersonian self-reliance: just as "appetite, lust, and passion" here trumps Southern bondage, anti-institutional cautiousness prompted Emerson to make light of "this bountiful cause of Abolition" as an "incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off." Closer at hand, Emerson's awareness of the more quotidian enslavement of white men to "badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions," becomes the focal point in the struggle for human emancipation.³⁰

The Emersonian underpinnings of male purity embrace reform of the cosmos at the expense of black slaves encumbered by law and custom who are therefore deemed unable to surpass history or culture. While curing "twelve or fifteen" million victims poses a daunting task, these numbers fuel dreams of universal emancipation in which physiology offers the only meaningful political index. Any other attributes that lead to the identification of a more specific group—say "two or three" million slaves—would frustrate hopes of universal reform by indicating that efforts for liberation first need to assess the complex forces that circumscribe and particularize blacks in ways that whites are not.

Masturbation phobia offers an antidote to political conflict by conceiving of citizens as ciphers marked by nothing more than whiteness or maleness, tantalizingly close to the ahistorical existence of prelapsarian subjectivity. "All men in the abstract are just & good—what hinders them in the particular is, the momentary predominance of the finite," wrote Emerson in his journal.³¹ Or in the view of popular reform: all men masturbate, revealing their lapsed goodness, but because not all men are black and enslaved, it is more difficult to intuit these particulars as having an original share of democratic virtue. The vice of slavery is its irredeemable specificity; in contrast, the virtue of

masturbation is its corporeal generality. "When all mankind are in a perfectly healthy condition, their constitutions are all alike," asserted the *Botanico-Medical Recorder*.³² This physiological principle, echoed in more heady terms by Emerson's statement in "Self-Reliance" that "varieties are lost sight of at a little distance. . . . One tendency unites them all," acknowledges only the inequities that afflict every individual, yet is unwilling to address the grievances of an oppressed subgroup of U.S. democracy.³³ Equalization, not equality, is the watchword of a democracy that forgets the historical contingency of race and nationalizes oppression for blacks.

Conservative estimates "that seven out of every ten boys in this country, at the age of twelve, are, at least acquainted with this debasing practice" mark an anxiety that masturbation has a hold on young citizens from all sections of the Union.³⁴ In comparison to the ubiquity of the solitary vice, race slavery appears as an isolated and "peculiar" concern, geographically limited by laws and custom to the South. Genital misery, in contrast, seemed a democratic disease, a type of self-reliance gone awry that made private corporeal liberation the first priority in the battle for human emancipation. *The Library of Health* thus endorsed

a statement in the Health Journal implying that the worst form of human slavery is that slavery to ourselves which every where exists; and which, until it is removed, is an insurmountable obstruction to the real, practical emancipation of others, even from their external bondage.³⁵

Infinitely repeatable and spreading "every where," the polluted body provided national pleasure by arguing for the urgent treatment of masturbatory bondage in ways that deferred care of "others" oppressed by the body politic. Many abolitionists seemed content to sublimate desires for "practical emancipation" by contemplating regeneration in the abstract. The *Liberator*, as one historian maintains, "seemed to view the struggle against masturbation and licentiousness as equal in importance with antislavery." ³⁶ The pandemic incidence of the socalled slavery of man to himself validated an equalizing outlook dismissive of specific sociohistorical ills, and enraptured with the afflictions common to all men insofar as their generic existence could also be conflated with and privatized under white sexuality.

Equality bred an epidemic of masturbation. As G. J. Barker-Benfield

states, the realization that "masturbation was equally accessible to all" inspired a brigade of moral missionaries to preach the laws of health to a public-if avid consumption of antimasturbation tracts and attendance at lectures on hygiene are any indication – preoccupied with the spread of onanist pleasures.³⁷ The data confirmed fears about links between sexual bondage and equality: "The vice exists. It is here in our city; in every city, in every town through this vast nation." ³⁸ Such assertions support critics who contend that anxieties over all sorts of democratic phenomena-class mobility, migration to urban centers, the erosion of patriarchal authority-caused nineteenth-century Americans not so much to masturbate but to think obsessively about masturbation. As Christopher Looby provocatively suggests, the volume of antimasturbation literature reveals an erotogenic tendency of U.S. democracy in which men imagined and reimagined scenes of male masturbators, thereby effectively, transfiguring masturbation from a solitary act to a collective discourse.³⁹

Such delight in thinking about men's bodies is not limited to homosocial contexts and homoerotic visions. Masturbation buffets a straight national politics; phobic concern for white male bodies legitimates examination of subjects whose racial opacity and heteronormativity remove them beyond the ken of social analysis. The translation of freedom into sexual terms represents not a politicization of sectors of human activity traditionally identified as nonpolitical but the erosion of politics to the most condensed entity imaginable-the corporeal subject. A profuse literature that probed and diagnosed the human body emerged, not in spite of but because of a paucity of ideological critiques directed against the interwoveness of commerce, patriarchy, and racism. A chaste public culture engendered a prolix discourse on the citizen as a bounded physiological entity, ignoring possibilities of the citizen as a relational actor who constantly mediates history and culture. The etiology of masturbation is democratic, although not simply because, as various scholars have proposed, sexual self-determination resonates with class concerns. Instead, an epidemic of solitary vice discloses the extent to which a democracy of white men rests uneasily on unacknowledged material, institutional, and rhetorical debts to African servitude.

Emerson's democratic posture establishes the self as an index of all structural change. Political theorist George Kateb defends this

methodology, stating that "the unreformed cannot reform the unreformed; all must reform themselves." 40 If an emancipatory vision fueled both antislavery and health reform, then freedom seemed that much closer for masturbators than slaves. Whereas a black slave seeking freedom had to await circumstance and opportunity, the "unwilling captive . . . to the habit of masturbation" need only resolve that "the individual himself must exercise great self-denial." ⁴¹ The "body in subjection," as The Library of Health put it in 1842, "must be self-emancipated."⁴² Emerson staked out this democratic doctrine in which all must reform themselves a year earlier in "Self-Reliance" and later used this stance to critique the Fugitive Slave Law. Calling for a solitary actor resistant to this infamous legislation, Emerson outlined a masculinist hero: "He only who is able to stand alone, is qualified for society." 43 Never fear that this lone figure might degenerate into the onanist; never fear that what "Self-Reliance" championed as the citizen's "independence of solitude" might become the masturbator's closet: nineteenth-century social discourse privileges this privatized body regardless if it is the site of virtue or vice.⁴⁴ What matters most is that the white male body standing alone furnishes an anti-institutional register promising not only that the social critics can resist institutions but also that the social critic need not think about institutions at all.

Hence, as Emerson finally worked up to a critique of the Fugitive Slave Law as the mechanism of a vicious institution, he privileged the private body over the national body. "You must be citadels and warriors, yourselves Declarations of Independence," he told an antislavery crowd opposed to a law that would require Northern citizens to consent and aid in the return of fugitive slaves to the South.⁴⁵ Although Emerson prefaces this statement by conceding that the citizen must now modify this "independence of solitude" and speak out on political issues, his response nonetheless individualizes cultural critique, telescoping the public sphere into the bounded confines of self. He personalizes freedom, making each citizen an embodiment of independence. Encouraging his auditors to contest a national edict that would, in effect, make them slave hunters for Southern interests, Emerson appealed to a republican tradition of active citizenship. But as he fused that tradition to a hyper-embodied subject, the public sphere that typically framed active citizenship retracted to a privacy whose limits were the human body.

Emerson's rendition of citizenship entails a phobic reaction to publicness. It is a response that both informs and derives from hygienic discourses that emphasized a modern, bourgeois sense of virtue over the classical republican idea of *virtù* or political devotion to the public good. At the heart of this revaluing of private concern over public engagement is a privileging of negative over positive liberty. The desire for freedom from context, as the previous chapter demonstrated, has lethal consequences for African Americans. Even in its extreme form of deathly freedom, such negative liberty will evaporate without a vibrant sense of positive liberty to underwrite private personal freedoms. Quentin Skinner argues that citizens "will find themselves stripped of their personal liberty" unless they also assert their freedom to participate in public service and pursue the public good.⁴⁶ But stripping subjects of personal liberty was a time-proven practice in the United States. Romantic renditions of suicide and other acts of political necrophilia ensured that enslaved persons were freed from all contingency to enjoy an absolute existence. White men, after this fashion, benefited from a touch of slavery as well-provided that the touch remained metaphoric or at the very most a hygienic condition. When Dr. Pancoast in Onanism, Spermatorrhoea spoke of citizens who "instead of enjoying a vigorous constitution . . . literally endure a *living* death," he dramatized the stakes of exercising personal liberty at all costs and the necessity of doing so with great discretion.⁴⁷

Under the slavery of man to himself in which liberty becomes a private endeavor similar to Emerson's personal embodiment of the Declaration of Independence, seminal weakness supplants criticism of national institutions. This logic predates the conjunction of reform, abolition, and sexuality. With the ascendancy of commercial sensibilities in the eighteenth century, as J. G. A. Pocock asserts, "virtue in the antique sense became archaic. . . . [The] *polis* is replaced by politeness." ⁴⁸ The substitution of personal conduct for civic behavior intensified with the rise of misplaced somatic politics in the United States. Not the citizen but the citizen's body provided a political terrain in which health crusaders anticipated Emerson's dictum of making people into facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence. Accolades for Sylvester Graham, one of the era's most popular hygienic reformers, compared him to "Thomas Jefferson [who] . . . did not deserve more of his countrymen, nor achieve a greater moral triumph in pen-

ning the Declaration of our Independence, than does the author of this lecture, in boldly exhibiting the moral obliquity" of man's subjection to sexual habit.⁴⁹ Graham's *A Lecture to Young Men* (1834), like its historic prototype of 1776, enumerated a series of grievances—in this case, uncontrolled seminal loss, nervous exhaustion, and decreased mental powers, all brought on by masturbation. This declaration of somatic rights echoes Jefferson's famous document, except that in this version the enemies were more personal and private, now identified as "the tyrant lust" and the "passion of a despotic power." ⁵⁰ Like Emerson's stance against the Fugitive Slave Law, the crusade against the slavery of man to himself redirected the complex and seemingly abstract problems of race slavery onto the theoretically manageable site of the young man's body.

Temperance advocate, dietary reformer, abolitionist, and leader of an amorphous campaign against solitary vice, Graham's career typifies how liberal reform hinged on the intense privacy of embodiment. A concern with the health of "systems of republican government" motivates him to take aim at the "SEXUAL DESIRE . . . that disturbs and disorders all the functions of the system." ⁵¹ Civic consciousness stirred by republicanism disintegrates into the citizen's heightened self-consciousness. Even among those most committed to sweeping social reform, the workings of the white male body had its attractions. Prominent abolitionists, many of whom lived according to the hygienic dictates of what was called the "Graham System," often confused governmental and biological systems-much as Douglass appeared to equate "the drinking system" and the "slave system." 52 Antislavery speakers and supporters often lodged at Graham boarding houses in an effort to regulate the "living volcano of unclean propensities and passions" that they saw erupting below both the beltline and Mason-Dixon Line.⁵³ "Such a knot of Abolitionists I never before fell in with," observed an Amherst College tutor of his visit to a Graham boarding house. He certainly expected to find "Grahamites" during his stay, but seemed pleasantly surprised to be sharing with "Garrisonites" a breakfast table devoid of all stimulants from coffee to jam. Among the "flaming Abolitionists" he enthusiastically glimpses are Arthur Tappan, William Goodell, Elijah Lovejoy, and Theodore Parker.⁵⁴ Sexuality, as an immanent and intimate force, suggested to antislavery men the priority of achieving personal emancipation be-

fore seeking political freedom for others. As a fellow reformer complained to Theodore Weld, "We are not fit to plead the cause of Freedom until we get free from the tyranny of our own passions. Till then we ourselves are in bondage. How many professed Abolitionists are thus enslaved!"⁵⁵

For all ardent young men who might not travel to the big city and stay in a Graham boarding house, Graham published *A Lecture to Young Men.* In its anxious discussion of involuntary ejaculation, debilitating erections, and libidinal overstimulation, this pamphlet advises youth how to handle the awesome responsibilities of freedom. Graham distinguishes his approach at the outset from that of standard commentaries on civic virtue by rejecting political theory as an overly abstract enterprise. For him, freedom is more intimate:

It is to little purpose that we are nicely accurate in the theoretical abstractions of political rights, while we neglect all the practical interests of political truth. . . . I do not say that political science is not to be cultivated; nor that abstract rights are not to be insisted on. . . . I contend, that it is infinitely better to secure the prosperity of the State, through the happiness of the people, than to sacrifice both in the defence of abstract metaphysical rights.

The pursuit of happiness does not lie in notions of republican virtue. Graham instead concentrates on boys who "excite and stimulate the genital organs," leading to the "peculiar convulsions" of orgasm.⁵⁶ The body politic requires embodiment in adolescent males so that non-representational "abstract rights" can be made flesh. After all, democracy would seem to demand commitment to what can be represented, not to esoteric political conflicts.

Masturbation thus makes for an easy handling of slavery.⁵⁷ As a postrepublican discourse, sexual self-reliance more than condenses the polis into politeness, as Pocock claims. Civic engagement becomes genital circumspection: the polis, in short, has been metonymically cut back to the extent of the penis. Private bodies, unlike the public body of the community, are not treated by critical attention to foundational linkages between race and capital but by pragmatic self-reliance. As Graham remarked, such misrecognition serves the "practical interests of political truth" by embodying national conflict and truncating possibilities for comprehensive cultural analysis. Such truncation not

only involved the distortion of metonymic representation. In more literal and drastic forms, disfigurement visited the male body as well.

"I Recommended Castration"

MANAGING SEXUAL SLAVES

The young men were born with knives in their brain. — Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England"

Frustrated by futile attempts to cure a young man's "constitutional disturbance," Dr. Josiah Crosby sought to reestablish corporeal order by radical means. He communicated to the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* his heroic efforts in treating one "Mr. —," a confirmed masturbator for a decade:

I did not think it advisable to continue the use of ordinary medicines to cure so desperate a disease. Believing the great constitutional disturbance to have been produced and kept up by the severe and repeated shocks given to the brain and nervous system by the seminal emissions, and that removing the testicles would remove the great source of difficulty, I recommended castration.

Repression benefits the citizen: Mr. — is now embarked on "a life of usefulness . . . actively engaged in making arrangements to go into business."⁵⁸ No longer a profligate in the spermatic economy, Mr. — disburses financial assets rather than squander physiological ones. Amid the uncertainties of republican fraternity, an occasional despotic intervention brings order to a body in which license and liberty have become indistinguishable.

Despite this regeneration through surgical violence, subsequent contributors to the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* condemned Crosby's treatment, insisting that what was touted as a cure was, in fact, a "mutilation." ⁵⁹ Yet castration seemed an appropriate treatment for other slaves to the solitary vice—if indeed they were black slaves. A physician from Fort King, Florida, in 1846 reported the case of a habitual onanist who "not unfrequently operated in this manner eight or nine times in the course of twenty-four hours," so that paralysis

and death seemed imminent.⁶⁰ Once threatened with castration, however, the patient overcame his addiction. Unlike Crosby's patient who is successfully reintegrated into the civic order, this self-abuser is a Southern slave, forever alienated from egalitarian fellowship. Citizen and slave require the same therapy if the surgeon equates the two, treating the individual sufferer as beyond the hope of self-reliance, reachable only by threat. While Mr. - enjoys a generic identity, the slave does not, and only the most insensitive surgeon would confuse two very different political and sexual bodies by prescribing the slave's castration for the citizen. Crosby's handling of masturbation runs counter to the principles of democratic selfhood by saddling the white citizen with a remedy whose severity appears better suited to persons congenitally sentenced to servitude. Castration produces the unwanted side effects of historicizing the body of a New England youth with a type of paternalism encumbering a "negro man placed under his [the doctor's] care."61

Viewed against the flood of antimasturbation tracts unleashed in the 1830s, Crosby's error lay in an incorrect inference that a democratic citizen should be treated with autocratic surgical methods. His more liberal-minded colleagues objected to castration on a combination of medical and political grounds that questioned if it were proper to foist control on a subject capable of exercising his own authority. In a rare instance when genital mutilation seemed the logical extension of self-reliance, castration was reluctantly admitted as a citizen's duty. As opposed to Mr. — who had no choice in the matter, the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* viewed somewhat more optimistically the castration of "H. F." because in this instance the act had been totally self-reflexive, inflicted by the masturbator himself:

All the evils resulting from this unrestrained indulgence, were presented in this truly unhappy man. He had been apprised of the danger which the continued practice would bring upon him, and was sensible that all his trials had their origin in this vice; and yet the propensity had become so strong that he could not resist it.... In his intercourse with his friends he was covered with shame and confusion, and seemed to feel conscious that every individual that he met with knew, as well as himself, the height and the depth of his degradation. In this condition, in a fit of desperation, he attempted to emasculate himself, but succeeded in removing one

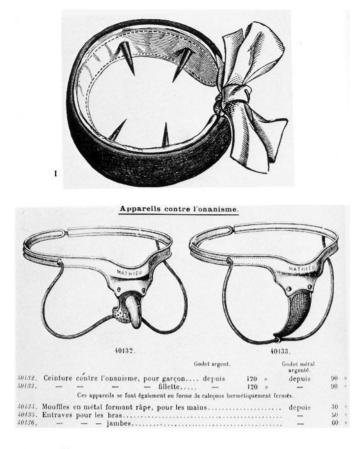
testicle only. After he recovered from the dangerous wound which he inflicted, he began to get better, and after two years he recovered his health and spirits. He has since, at the age of forty-five, *married* a very clever woman, and they live in peace and harmony.⁶²

Unlike Crosby's account of his patient, the story of H. F. documents the self-consciousness of the sufferer, weakened by a compulsive humiliation that begets losses of semen, control, and fellowship. If "unrestrained indulgence" demands restraint, if liberty requires a little tyranny, as Crosby supposed, then the citizen could decide how much was necessary. As H. F. proved by his rehabilitation and eventual marriage, this authority need not be applied with full despotic force. Without recourse to brutal practices that seemed more appropriate to the treatment of slaves, democratic sons could be trusted to cure themselves.

The efficacy of such cures corresponded to a citizen's willingness to withdraw from civic life. The healthy subject could do without the polis. His body still served as an index of national vitality, although in the most politically ironic way: only by severing his messy entanglements with the public sphere could he attain the freedom of U.S. manhood. In his youth, the citizen "received a strenuous education in autonomy," and as a maturing physio-political subject, he was encouraged to intensify this independence via self-imposed alienation from democratic culture.⁶³ Conduct books written for young men reworked virtù as virtue and politics as politeness. The American Gentleman (1836) thus urged subjects to resist the lures of a democracy that was becoming increasingly urban: in its preoccupation with how "the apprentice or clerk . . . [will] make use of his liberty," this moral guide warned of "parties of pleasure," "vicious connexions," and other fraternal comminglings. "Virtue can stand without assistance, and considers herself as very little obliged," continued The American Gentleman, "but vice, spiritless and timorous, seeks the shelter of crowds, and support of confederacy."64 Emerson struck this popular chord when he belittled the workings of political parties, and instead honored "a man who puts off all foreign support, and stands alone." 65 His regimen accords with a prescription popularized by Graham's Lecture to Young Men a few years earlier. Because nocturnal emissions ravaged masturbators susceptible to even the mildest stimulation, Graham counseled listeners wishing to regulate their seminal reserves to forswear opium, coffee, tea, ginger, mustard, and peppermint—all foreign substances that excited the nervous system and came back to haunt young men when they were standing alone. Both reformers, Emerson and Graham, devised isolationist policies in which the citizen stood responsible for the health of his own politicized body.

Masturbation could only end where it began (and continued)with the solitary transgressor of nature's laws. Treatments of so-called self-pollution with drugs or mechanical contrivances seemed ill-suited to physiological self-reliance because such methods bypassed the individual, the only meaningful political calculus for most of the liberal, white United States. Dr. Trall in his Home Treatment for Sexual Diseases averred that "self-discipline" restored health, and "Dr." Graham (as he liked to be called though he never received formal medical training) sneered at "the whole farrago of stimulants, tonics, &c., &c. and the various mineral remedies and patent specifics" that were dispensed to masturbators.⁶⁶ He instead counseled adolescent males with the exact dictum that "The American Scholar" offered to the nation in its cultural adolescence — "Know thyself." ⁶⁷ Metaphysical self-help and hyper-embodied democracy follow the same path: like any number of popular hygienic manuals, Emerson's essay seeks to limit the scholar's dependence on alienating and foreign cultural forms. For the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, servility to French inventions (see figure 3) inhibited the autonomy necessary to overcome "the tyrant lust" described by Graham:

These applications are intended either to give warning of an approaching erection by causing pain, or else by compressing the seminal ducts, or the urethra, to prevent the discharge of semen. To the former kind belong the so-called *spermatorrhoea rings*, which consist of a metallic hoop, furnished on the inside with teeth, against which the penis is pressed during erection. Among the latter is an invention of M. Trousseau, consisting of a smooth bulb-shaped body, to be worn in the rectum, which acts by compression against the ducts of the vesiculae seminales to prevent the escape of semen. To the same class belongs, we presume, an extraordinary machine invented by a sufferer (real or imaginary) from seminal emissions. . . . It consists of a bed plate, upon which the organ rests, while a



(1) Four-Pointed Urethral Ring, from J. L. Milton, *Pathology and Treatment* of *Spermatorrhoea* (London, 1887). No comment. (2) Apparatuses against onanism, from Maison Mathieu catalogue, 1904.

3 Imports of European contraptions were sold to help men in the United States emancipate themselves from enslaving physical "habits." Hygienic reformers, however, tended to discredit these external means as impediments to the development of an inward self-reliance. In fact, as some authorities associated with antimasturbation campaigns suggested, these and other devices could be used for autoerotic purposes. (Source: Peter Gay, *Education of the Senses: The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1984].)

plate above it is pressed downwards by a screw in the centre of a round box, in which is coiled a spiral spring. Below this box is an ingenious arrangement of cog-wheels, span-wheels, adjustable screws, &c., &c.

These devices seemed destined to fail, not because of inefficiency or sadism but because they discounted the curative powers of selfreliance. Such contraptions enervated the subject, creating an erotic dependence on "mechanical appliances" whose "very contact is sometimes enough to produce the effect they are intended to cure." Virtuous bodies abided a discipline of self-regulation and self-surveillance that dictated "early rising, simple diet, regular occupation and the avoidance of improper thoughts and habits."⁶⁸ Involuntary seminal loss, like the want of self-reliance, had but one cause. And this cause, as medical experts and educators insisted, was the desire for sociopolitical contact.

The Social Origins of the Solitary Vice

If you suffer evil, depend upon it, it comes not from the legitimate and undisturbed economy of your original constitution. —Sylvester Graham, *A Lecture to Young Men*

Corruption was not inherent to the antebellum body. Iniquity was known to stalk boarding houses and gambling dens, but seemingly more innocuous sites of democratic association such as factories, dormitories, and gentlemen's social clubs bred vice as well. Even the nursery became unsafe once parents opened it up to domestic servants who instructed young masters and mistresses in the arts of "self-abuse." The etiology of masturbation uncovered proof of its nonessential, extraneous character. Legislation making it an offense to teach a person how to masturbate reveals an insistent belief that the origins of solitary vice were social, not natural.⁶⁹ How then to explain the observations of those who had witnessed autoeroticism in animals?

Joseph Howe's *Excessive Venery, Masturbation, and Continence* (1883) provided an answer by arguing that onanism could not be natural to the body's (constructed) naturalness:

The moral trammels of civilized society and ignorance of physiological laws give origin to the vice. . . . But masturbation is not confined to human bipeds. The lower of creation sometimes display lascivious proclivities in that direction. Dogs, cats, monkeys, and rats have been known to masturbate. Such cases must be exceedingly rare, because the opportunities for sexual congress among animals are unlimited. Indeed, it is more than probable that the creatures so indulging must have been taught the habit by some depraved beings of the human species.⁷⁰

Pollution in the animal kingdom testifies to the innate iniquity of human sociality. The purity of an individual's original constitution was forever lost once humans congregated and spread vicious habits among each other. Return to an asocial existence was impossible, but for domestic reformers it was still possible to quarantine the family from unhealthy associations. Children who never encounter dissolute servants or fallen schoolmates never have reason to let their hands or minds go astray. Masturbation would never touch her boys, explained one hygienic crusader, because she never allowed their chums to spend the night, and the "secret indulgence" would never excite her daughters because a servant from the lower classes would never find employment under her roof. She admitted this household regimen might appear unneighborly, snobbish, or even unegalitarian, yet far better to keep a son friendless and a daughter overworked than to "expose them to be instructed in that knowledge which would be a life-long curse." A healthy democracy demanded antidemocratic measures: sons and daughters could remain free only by abstaining from civic life. It is hardly surprising that this mother urged readers in Emersonian fashion to "teach a useful and valuable lesson to our children of self-reliance."71

But as antimasturbation tracts conceded, sheltering the young was an insurmountable task in a nation whose devotion to middle-class culture made colleges, professional workplaces, and social organizations (such as sewing bees, *conversazione*, and lyceums) normative settings that replaced the family as the locus of order and interaction. Fearing that boys at boarding school were morally adrift without proper patriarchal care, John Todd's popular conduct book, *The Student's Manual* (1835), advised young men about everything from good study habits to improper physical ones that kept "the soul chained to itself." He couched his famous diatribe against masturbation in Latin (his euphemistic target was "ONANIS SCELUS" or "the wicked act of Onan"), a gesture to the belief that only untutored youth remain free of degrading cultural influences.⁷² The problem, however, was that even as education, whiteness, and maleness qualified subjects for citizenship, the democracy into which they were incorporated as "all men" both historicized and particularized this abstract identity. White men lost cultural opacity once they took part in a heterogeneous sociopolitical world that exposed generic personhood as a hyper-embodied and historically contingent proposition.

In preparation for democratic life, the young citizen needed to learn to withstand the corporate pleasures of democracy itself. Todd thus cautioned against fellowship and fraternity: students "are in the habit of studying aloud, together, or in small clubs; - a very bad practice. The habit is soon formed, so that the mind refuses to make any efforts alone; and then it becomes necessary to have a constant 'Bee' to aid it."73 Democracy facilitated contagion: although socials and clubs reproduced bourgeois virtues, they also engendered unpredictable forums where people of different ages, class backgrounds, and tastes mingled. Unprecedented demographic changes created a world increasingly built on murky social relationships lacking traditional lines of authority. "The family's role as educational institution began to give way to a growing reliance on self-education.... The period between 1820 and 1860 demonstrated the fastest rate of urban growth in all American history: the proportion of people living in cities rose 797 percent while the national population increased only 226 percent," states Karen Halttunen.⁷⁴

Yet the epidemic of masturbation was not so much a symptom of sons set free from rural household authority. The family itself, because it was also seen as a site of intimate association, whittled away at the citizen's autonomy and independence. Seth Pancoast's *Onanism, Spermatorrhoea* at first implies that there is nothing wrong with sociality in its opening plate of "the healthy couple and their child" (see figure 4). This well-attired family represents the surest protection against solitary vice, especially as their wholesome interaction is laced with pedagogical offerings for the unconscious. The capering child remembers to look back at his parents for approval; the gridlike

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pattern of the father's trousers implies regulation, signaling that order resides in this man's loins; the demure matron holds her husband's umbrella rather than allowing him to handle it: each detail marks the bourgeois family as a virtuous breeding ground for future citizens. But this close proximity of bodies and social interdependence also makes the family the parent of vice. A second plate, a distorted version of the "healthy couple," supplements the frontispiece, undercutting the family's ability to provide resistance against erotic community. Titled "The Onanists and their Child" (see figure 5), this illustration shows all the telltale signs of vice. Sallow and decrepit, each family member has their hands turned inward, betraying an unnatural obsession with self that nurtures a destructive individualism. Hunched shoulders and dependence on canes to support broken-down constitutions imply a severe lack of self-reliance. These family portraits reveal the social logic of solitary vice: they picture a family, intimating that the solitary vice is not self-derived but rooted in uncontrolled pleasures of association passed down to generations of citizens.⁷⁵ No wonder, then, that Emerson thought of society in paranoid fashion as a "conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members." If "Self-Reliance" asked, "Is not a man better than a town?" moral reformers knew why.76

With the realization that white women also assembled in factories, rooming houses, social circles, and schools, hygienic crusaders tossed delicacy aside to lecture females about the dangers of erotic communal vice. An 1842 article focused on normally pure girls and young women to reveal how collective accommodations of women factory workers bred self-depravity:

The congregating of females together in the various manufacturing establishments is a most fruitful source of moral contamination. One female may thus spread the habit among hundreds. In one school district it was a frequent custom among the female schoolmates to visit each other and pass the night for the purpose of self-pollution. One female, in another district in the same town, was in the habit of teaching the practice to every girl she met who had not previously acquired it.⁷⁷

Social intercourse imperiled putatively unmarked subjects: white women were now susceptible to the particularities of having economic and historical identities. Their hyper-embodiment could be offset by



The healths couple and there child

4 and **5** The contrast between these two families implies the fear of autoeroticism as a collective disease in which the sins of fathers and mothers are visited on generations of future citizens. (Source: Seth Pancoast, *Onanism, Spermatorrhoea, Porneiokalogynomiapathology: Boyhood's Perils and Manhood's Curse; an Earnest Appeal to the Young of America* [Philadelphia, Pa., 1858].)



The Onomists and their Child

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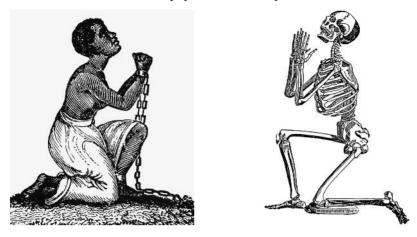
a depoliticization that removed them from public spheres where their bodies had become particular, immodest, and subject to excitement. In short, the scandal of women's sexualization and homoeroticism was defused by their civic isolation. Mary Gove, dubbed the "female equivalent to Sylvester Graham," explained this treatment and exhorted women to beware the passions of sociopolitical life.⁷⁸ Just as the Graham system entailed an abstemious diet purged of seasoned foods, fermented drinks, and coffee, Gove cast the public sphere itself as an ungovernable stimulant. Although Gove broadened hygienic rhetoric to address women, her argument contributes to a paradoxical ideology in which women best serve national culture by remaining immune to it. By identifying females as equally susceptible to solitary vice, she insisted that women could also exercise the cure of self-reliance, a radical gesture that placed women within a male political pathology even as it removed them from public culture.

In Lectures to Women on Anatomy and Physiology (1846), Gove describes the solitary vice as a social disease bred by the clamors of an enervating democratic order. The source of genital misery lies in an overcivilized world that unhinges the self with a bombardment of dangerous stimuli. The source of salvation, in contrast, lies where it always has-in an undefiled nature that antedates the turmoil of sociopolitical life. Gove rhapsodizes about the prelapsarian existence of "the Indians, the lower orders of Irish, and the slaves of the South," who when juxtaposed to white women, live happier, healthier lives because they are sheltered from the pernicious excitement of bourgeois democracy. Because neither "primitive" hunters nor "uncivilized" laborers live in an "artificial manner," and because neither are deprived the supposed benefits of a drudgery euphemistically recast as "exercise," they remain physiologically free-if not politically so. Immediately after she imagines the virtues of being racially oppressed, Gove sketches the vices of white women whose bodily habits make them "victims of civilization." On the one hand, her argument naturalizes slavery as though it were a presocial formation unconnected to exploitative systems of so-called civilization; on the other, her analysis reconciles white women to social alienation by inveighing against the "evils of civic life." 79 White female sexuality is cathected to nonwhite bodies in order to prioritize physiological awareness over political consciousness. The phobic embodiment of white women comes at the

expense of romanticizing racial and ethnic populations as naturally not historically—inhabiting abased spaces in the national hierarchy.

With society to blame for the body's bad habits, racial oppression vanishes only to reappear as the private symptoms of individual illness. If as a character in Gove's 1849 novel, Agnes Morris, says, "habits are very enslaving," then for the body politic, it is not slavery that is enslaving but the human body itself.⁸⁰ While likening masturbators to slaves contextualizes white sexuality, such metaphors also constrict the polis to the scope of individual pathology. The intent of U.S. hygienic reform was not to study and categorize the subject as Foucault's History of Sexuality might encourage one to conclude. Hyperembodiment was hardly necessary to circumscribe citizens: an array of economic, racial, sentimental, and juridical orders already regulated bodies. Rather, the challenge was to deny the various factors (capitalist ambition, black enslavement, sectional crisis) that mediated and unsettled white identity; the challenge was to annihilate the citizen's discursive existence and give birth to a purely corporeal identity. Hygienic discourse was also a political one that broke in on the solitude of self-abusers, not simply to scrutinize individuals but to construct the citizen solely as a natural body unexposed to the pleasures or conflicts of civic life.

Autoeroticism made for an autoreferential political subject. As one specialist wrote in 1858, masturbators are "miserable victims haunted with an unclean demon of their own creation. . . . [T]hey themselves are the authors" of their polluted state.⁸¹ With only the self to blame, could the citizen produce a social diagnosis? Consumed with authoring one's own text, could the self write cultural criticism? Answers to these questions lie in an expurgated subject, stripped of heritage, memory, and social relevance. In his homespun anatomy of the human body, William Alcott unveils this perfected citizen as a skeleton (see figure 6). Divested of the flesh that endows—or from a different perspective, encumbers-the self with material attributes of gender and race, this body lacks all foundation and motivation for involvement in the sociopolitical world. Although its pose harkens back to the abolitionist figure of the kneeling slave woman (see figure 7),⁸² this skeleton has no need to clamor for fraternal affiliation because its sheer anonymity already tokens acceptance in the whiteness of generic personhood. Appearing in Alcott's The House I Live In; or the Human



6 and **7** The ideal citizen, unlike the slave of Northern liberal imagination, has no difficulty achieving disembodiment. (Source for 6: William Alcott, *The House I Live In; or the Human Body: For the Use of Families and Schools.* 11th ed. [Boston: Waitt, Pierce, and Co., 1844]; source for 7: *Specimen of Modern Printing Types, Cast at the Letter Foundry of the Boston Type and Stereotype Company* [Boston: White and Potter, 1845], stereotype plate no. 844. Courtesy of Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University).

Body (1837), the subject as skeleton suggests a historically inexperienced body as the ideal citizen. The skeleton's slender form is easily domesticated as eye sockets are figured as windows, joints as hinges, and bones as pillars. Such a self is not without a specific identity, however; the hyper-embodied subject that stays at home and shuns social intercourse is an identity reserved for white men who know better than to seek republican pleasures in the public sphere.

Taking Political Pleasure in White Men

Reformers took heart in the belief that sexual bondage could be cured with doses of self-reliance. Abolitionists such as Cassius Clay had little hope of effecting a similar remedy for African American slaves: "I have studied the Negro character," declared Clay. "They lack selfreliance—we can make nothing of them. God has made them for the

sun and the banana!"⁸³ Faced with the complexity of racial servitude, reformers found it easier to treat bondage as the sexual condition of white men. It was not Graham's spartan fare alone that attracted abolitionists; many were also seduced by his catachrestic logic to view racial injustice as a particular vice of white slave owners. The problem, as many prominent antislavery men and women suggested, was not black slavery but white slaveholding.

Following Graham's rejection of abstract political theorizing in preference for an embodied concept of rights, reformers offered selfreliance as a means of liberating the white planter enslaved to laziness and lust by his enslavement of others. The politicization of bodily habit aligned the masturbator with both slave and master: playing on the meanings of "constitution" as legal ordinance and physiological condition, Graham attributed the especial evil of masturbation to the fact that "it is a secret and solitary vice, which requires the consent of no second person, - and therefore the practice has little to prevent its frequency." 84 With no checks and balances to one's constitution, the subject's passions tyrannize over the citizen. The self-reliant individual qua masturbator bears an uncanny relation to the irresistible autocrat: self-subjected to physical stimulus, the body becomes both master and slave. Somatic notions of power and its abuse offer substantial political dividends: the white body that is simultaneously enslaving and enslaved recasts the relation of master and slave so that it is neither a relation nor a dialectic. Slavery instead is an insular, privatized system based neither on "consent" nor national policy.

Physiological concepts—especially in their capacity to individualize vice—seeped into the language of antislavery reform. In an early, tentative address on slavery, Emerson condensed the body politic to a politicized body, going so far as to employ a common euphemism for masturbation—"self-indulgence"—to suggest the seductiveness of bondage for the master. Sympathizing more with slaveholder than slave, Emerson told a Concord audience in November 1837,

For us to keep slaves would be the sum of wickedness, but in the planter it may indicate only a degree of self-indulgence which we may parallel readily enough nearer home; in attacking him we are demanding of him a superiority to his conditions which we do not demand of ourselves. He

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is to blame, of course, but in the same sense the slave is to blame for allowing himself to be held as a slave.⁸⁵

Construed as a solitary vice, slavery has nothing to do with social relationships and everything with matters of individual proclivity. Emerson's commitment to equality as equalization generates parallels among slaveholders, nonslaveholders, and slaves in which each suffers common moral frailties. Bestowing humanity on chattel is a radical gesture, but it is also one that severs the slave from an institutional context. Within this humanitarian logic, the slave is only subject to the claims of a shared humanity; he or she suffers nothing from a racebased economic system and everything from his or her own weakness. Self-reliance offers no help to the slave; in fact, it legitimates his or her continued enslavement.

Emerson's remarks limn the stakes of the cross-pollination between antislavery rhetoric and a discourse on male sexuality. Reformers charged that slavery dangerously eroticized Southern society, bombarding it with harmful stimuli that overexcited the planter class. Enthralled by what Emerson saw as the "love of power, the voluptuousness of holding a human being in his absolute control," the slave owner can only liberate himself by making a steadfast resolution not to pursue such self-gratification.⁸⁶ Consider the plea of John Rankin in Letters on American Slavery (1833) to his slaveholding brother: warning that "slavery promotes vice among the free inhabitants of slaveholding States," Rankin cast it as a pollution that threatens the moral physiology of white citizens. To combat the seductiveness of slaveholding, Rankin urged his brother to adopt a regimen of abstemious selfreliance. The embodied personhood of white men, not the abstract impersonality of governmental systems, is the proper target of reform energies:

It is said "the government has enslaved the Africans, and therefore slavery is the sin of the nation, and not individuals." Nothing can be more fallacious than this excuse. The government never made, nor held a single slave, nor did it ever compel a single individual to become a slaveholder. Individuals first made, and still continue to hold slaves [I]t is vain for slaveholders to charge their sin upon the government. Every one of them shall bear his own sin.⁸⁷

The masturbatory structure of slaveholding equates the need for social justice with the young man's efforts to resist compulsive selfabasement. Slaveholding demands the same ideological cure as masturbation: only an individualist perspective, formulated in opposition to national indictment, can overcome vice; only avoidance of systemic contact (and systemic analysis) can grant the citizen an unencumbered body. This logic prompts a distinction between slaveholding and slavery in which the former, because it is constructed as the "disease" of white male bodies, can be treated, while the latter, encompassing all the aspects of a social system, is beyond repair.

"Progress is not for society. Progress belongs to the Individual," wrote Emerson in an early lecture containing many of the concepts that would become central to "Self-Reliance."⁸⁸ Emerson uses "progress" to renounce social vision as inconvenient, opting instead to pursue reform privately as a matter of personal fulfillment. The young man in control of his changing body unfolds into the citizen well-adjusted to a limited stake in republican activity: each refuses to indulge behaviors that throw consciousness into interactive public spheres. To confront head-on the complexities of the polis, what Rankin called "the sin of the nation," would destroy any illusion of autonomy, forcing the citizen to come to grips with his own impotence before and dependence on national abuse.

Postscript

Sixteen years after the first edition of his *Lecture to Young Men*, Graham again decried the dangers of "fanatical excitement," except that now his target was not the human body but the union besieged by the 1850 constitutional crisis over slavery. Counting himself among "the most fervent of the Abolitionists," Graham continued to read virtue and vice as symptoms of national corruption.⁸⁹ As a health reformer, he had urged the young man to respect the "laws of his constitution," and now in *Letter to the Hon. Daniel Webster*, Graham acted as a political reformer, imploring the United States to uphold the Constitution or undergo the ravages of a civil war.⁹⁰ Not having to retool his argument is more than convenient: the equivalence between governmental and hygienic vocabularies accords the nation a somatic form

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whose disruptions seem as atomized and local as the debilities plaguing the male body. Reminding Webster of the sanctity of the Constitution, Graham merely updates his earlier exhortations that young men should cherish their physical constitutions. Slavery, like masturbation, is an unnatural practice spawned by the "sordid minds" of the South, "where the passions prevail over reason" (13). Much as the sexual subject yet uninitiated into the public sphere remains pure, the nation, in Graham's eyes, was uncorrupted until the slaveholders' lust for power adulterated the compact. Graham's use of "constitution" from the *Lecture* (1834) to the *Letter* (1850) does not represent an enlargement of analytic vision that conjoins the sexual with the political; instead, it reinscribes national conflict as a private sexual matter.

Equally delicate in nature, both the male and U.S. constitutions are threatened by powerful stimulants. Like the body overexcited by coffee or erotic fantasy, the slavery crisis inflames the internal workings of the body politic, a fact that Graham finds confirmed in vitriolic ejaculations of proslavery politicians. Underlying his 1834 tirade against onanism is an idea of a "reciprocal influence" where the "cephalospinal nerves" act as a two-way circuit in which genital self-abuse injures the brain and, in turn, lascivious fantasies dangerously titillate the genitals.⁹¹ With proper self-government, however, the young man can make an ally of "reciprocal influence," and in one stroke tame both the "stimulations of semen" and "imaginations upon the mind." 92 Likewise, the weakness of the republic in 1850 stems from a lack of "reciprocal obligation" between the North and South to uphold the union (8). In specific terms, "reciprocal obligation" requires the North to recognize slaves as property, which in its fugitive forms should be remanded to its owners, and for its part the South will "unite with us in establishing, sustaining, and submitting to a national government, by which all further extension of slavery in our country shall be absolutely and forever prohibited" (8). Exactly as self-government is the key to controlling the "reciprocal influence" between cerebral impulse and genital conduct, only Southerners' moral confrontation of slavery can bring about a healthy sense of consensus between the states. Both for the young man and nation, reciprocal relations imply a body built on consensus, a word that, as Raymond Williams explains, acquires a "physiological sense" by the mid-nineteenth century.93 Conceived not as a social ill but an individual sin, slavery is remedied with the

same cure applied to the masturbator—virtuous self-reliance. Only "voluntary emancipation" can safeguard constitutional purity; efforts to bend the South to the North's mandates will be as fruitless as attempts to curb masturbation with autocratic surgeries, claims Graham in his *Letter* (3).

Echoing the onanist's compulsive habits, slaveholders are addicted to a "self-destroying madness" that imperils U.S. society and its Constitution (11). Decades of this practice has rendered the South politically impotent, so that now it desperately tries to maintain and extend slavery. While terrible in moral and hygienic terms, this prolonged eroticization of the South has graver discursive consequences, limiting criticism to a hyper-embodied context. Eradication of Southern bondage and the calming of national tensions, in Graham's view, can occur solely through the "spontaneous action of the slaveholders individually" (8). Yes, Graham condemns slavery, but an analytic vision that critiques the slave *system* is stunted in an environment where social action is as "spontaneous" and individual as masturbation. This personalization of conflict performs a public service by disabling inquiries into the white male body's ability to cleanse the body politic of structural corruption.

Emerson's statement that "it is the age of the first person singular," presents more than an impressionistic assessment of his times. It also registers a prevailing political idiom of a nation trying to manage the conflicts and contradictions of democracy. Within this romantic, yet ultimately ascetic political language that narrows cultural critique to somatic metaphor, little remained for the conception of a more articulated, interconnected political subjectivity. Contraction of the nation to the body leaves the public sphere pristine, though denuded of complexity, dialogue, and nuance. And not just any physical body would do: the white male sexual body served as the subject of a sterile cultural criticism that, ironically, insulated national culture from criticism. The discourse on white men as self-abusers provided political pleasure by legitimating a catachrestic mode of analysis that refused to disabuse the nation of its innocence.



FEMALE MEDIUMS, SÉANCES, AND THE

OCCULT PUBLIC SPHERE

Phobic concern for white men as sexual citizens stemmed from a belief that democratic health could be ensured by rendering the collective political body as a private physical body. U.S. cultural criticism remains equally disposed to diagnose the collective body in terms of individual psychology. Amid violence and wounding, natural body and national body collide in "the pathological public sphere." ¹ Analysis of the postcontemporary United States as traumatized stands among the most recent and illuminating ways of thinking about compulsive forces that organize discrete bodies into a public. The public body has long been analogized by complexes that befit what Hal Foster calls a "psychic nation": from George Beard's American Nervousness (1881) to the "'narcissistic' 1970s and the 'schizophrenic' 1980s"and I would add, critical theories of trauma at the beginning of a new millennium-runs a tendency to pathologize U.S. culture.² A preoccupation with the psychic health of the public sphere is perhaps a particular symptom of democracy, especially a democracy harboring secret longings for the supposed stability of tyranny. As one specialist of "mental hygiene" noted back in 1833, "Insanity prevails most in those countries where people enjoy civil and religious freedom. . . . There is but little insanity in those countries where the government is despotic." ³ This linking of psychological balance and political order,

despite its metaphoric imprecision, highlights a long-standing penchant to equate the complexities of democracy with interiority, privacy, and unconsciousness.

Fusing the Unconscious to National Pathology

HAWTHORNE AND HABERMAS

Like an analyst who treats psychosis by reaching back to primal scenes, citizens have used a variety of metaphors that address the psychopolitical makeup of a populace that collectively represses inequality, forgets the past, or experiences fragmentation in its presumably coherent, homogeneous, and masculine identity. "The 'psychification' of the nation is an old tendency in cultural criticism," writes Foster.⁴ While this chapter benefits from this tendency, it also resists the temptation to psychologize the public body by taking a step back to explore the implication of configuring equality around the unconscious. Rather than ask which psychological analogies are appropriate for understanding national politics at different historical junctures, the real question is: What are the effects of using "mental hygiene" as a category of political analysis in the first place? This question charts a genealogy of the slippage between the material conditions of citizenship and spiritual rhetoric as well as between a decaying language of democratic politics and an incipient language of psychology. This genealogy seems fairly straightforward and argues that political meanings of "psychification" can be gauged only by returning to the popular origins of U.S. psychological discourse, specifically in mesmerism and spiritualism. But genealogy also demands a suspicion of origins: instead of pinpointing a primal political scene (such as the Civil War) as the source of U.S. maladjustment to its own history, I examine the liberal democratic obsessions that led citizens to analogize problems of political engagement as matters of psychic distress.

Not bound to a notion of event as "history," this approach is concerned with events as cultural and discursive phenomena that construct a national public sphere suffering from poor mental hygiene. Nor bound to a notion of politics as located solely in civil codes or laws, this approach also insists on reading occult phenomena that many would treat as non- or prepolitical as constituting a deeply popu-

lar and political sphere. From one perspective, then, any diagnosis of national psychosis precedes psychology as a discipline, and can be traced back to proto- and pseudopsychological investigations involving hypnosis, somnambulism, séances, and clairvoyance beginning with mesmerism in the 1830s and later spiritualism.⁵ Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) fuses popular interest in the unconscious to the public sphere by collapsing mesmerists and other violators of individual privacy with liberal reformers such as women's rights activists, penal reformers, and communitarians. Once a language of interiority, no matter its mixture of occultism and science, becomes available for metonymic extrapolation, it is a small step for Northern reformers to describe a national pathology.

From another perspective, the body politic's mental hygiene unfolds not with a sudden availability of psychological concepts but with the development of the public sphere itself. Interiority becomes possible only with the rise of a public that privileges the private recesses of bourgeois domestic intimacy. Against the abstract presence summoned forth by the public sphere, as Jürgen Habermas explains, private persons discovered a more particular inwardness. Broadly applicable norms governing public life fostered the development of individuals' inner life. Interiority is a public effect: "Subjectivity, as the innermost core of the private, was always already oriented to an audience (Publikum)." 6 In U.S. democratic culture, privacy comes in reaction to the public sphere: this is the drama of Blithedale in which the highbrow aestheticism of its narrator provides a defense mechanism against the garish nature of popular entertainment. Hawthorne's psychological memoir of cynical idealists who cannot get along with one another aptly condenses the narrator's anguished unconscious with the dystopic functioning of a national public sphere.

Yet Hawthorne's psychic nation circa 1852—his novel could be said to pathologize egotism and paranoia as cultural traits—is much more conflicted than Habermas's public sphere.⁷ In Habermas's account, there is little evidence that "interiority" is anything other than snugly lodged in the intimate sphere of the bourgeois family—much as there is little in his account to suggest that the public sphere at its highwater mark of eighteenth-century virtue operated under anything other than "the rational communication of a public consisting of cultivated human beings."⁸ This Kantian ideal admittedly suffers from

the inevitable encroachments of mercantilism, state bureaucracy, and mass media, among other factors, but prior to this breakdown, the public sphere offers enriching opportunities for self-realization and rational exchange. In public, persons could adopt "the role of human beings pure and simple."9 In the scheming world of Blithedale's public, however, it is difficult to imagine a subjectivity not built on ample amounts of overdetermination and repression, just as it is hard to envision a sort of "golden age" public sphere in which historically and socially uncomplicated human beings are not motivated by distrust but are governed by shared commitments to rationality. Habermas's description of the public sphere as "the scene of a psychological emancipation that corresponded to the political economic one" aptly characterizes the goals of the Blithedale experiment in socialism — and yet, this liberal utopia unravels because antidemocratic tendencies and depoliticized subjects haunt these emancipations.¹⁰ The disarticulation of the public sphere is present from the outset: as Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge theorize, the origins of a public sphere assuming universality are tainted with a contradiction that "excludes substantial life interests and nevertheless claims to represent society as a whole."11 What rationality and abstractness cannot admit are material conditions and practices-including labor, sexuality, embodiment, and social inequality-that lack the coherence of bourgeois generality. As Miriam Hansen explains, "The bourgeois public's claim to represent a general will functions as a powerful mechanism of exclusion: the exclusion of substantial social groups, such as workers, women, servants, as well as vital social issues, such as the material conditions of production and reproduction."12

In light of the political and psychological work necessary to generate and then repress such exclusions, the public sphere's universality and subject's "psychological emancipation" both hinge on material inequalities and specific unfreedoms. The occult frames such antidemocratic overdeterminations in the nineteenth-century United States, but in ways that are especially hard to recognize since disembodied souls and clairvoyants seemed blessed with the highest and purest liberty. Séances, ghostly mediums, animal magnetism, spirit rappings in short, an assortment of occult practices for staging interiority in the U.S. public—are also political practices that engender an ideal of citizenship supposedly free of material considerations. Rather than add

to doubts about the credibility of mediumship and other paranormal demonstrations from this era, I suggest that *Blithedale*, in conjunction with mesmerist and spiritualist texts, reflects an occult sphere of citizenship that popularized the suspension of historical awareness. Trance and sleepwalking doubled as political perception; hypnosis and animal magnetism outstripped democratic attention to social issues; clairvoyance and mediumship saw past civic engagement: in each case, a mystic sense of the unconscious overshadowed a type of republican consciousness associated with the public sphere. Enraptured by psychological investigations and otherworldly knowledge that by the 1850s had become a "national phenomenon," the citizen found it easy to forget the inequities and hierarchies that made his or her privileged ignorance possible.¹³

As mesmerism and spirit rapping came into vogue amid an era described by historians as a "spiritual hothouse" and "nationwide spiritual ferment," religious, early psychological, and occult interests combined in an "interdisciplinary" focus on the individual soul as a means of thinking about—and also screening—the body politic.¹⁴ This psychic nation is more than an artifact of transcendence or sublimation: the public sphere's spiritual dimension lodges the most intimate revelation of self—the soul—at the center of public life. Intimacy stands at the center of public life since it is the coming together of private persons that constitutes the public sphere.¹⁵ Not that bourgeois society need apologize for its private origins: rather, the problem is that the public sphere returns obsessively to its origins, privatizing the politics that transpire when persons come together as a public.

Hawthorne's novel reveals the interplay of public sphere and private affair as the ascendancy of privatization as a political mode. Joining an experiment in collective living, the book's narrator, Miles Coverdale, quickly confuses the fate of socialism with his own failure to seduce the commune's women, Zenobia, a passionate feminist, and her protégé Priscilla, a girl of reputed psychic prowess. The dystopic unraveling of this idealized community once blessed with emancipatory potential animates Coverdale's confession, the last words of *Blithedale:* "I—I myself was in love—with—Priscilla!" (247). The resolution to turn away from the pleasures and challenges of associative life and look inward at the libidinal investments that drive his narrative amounts to a decision to make emancipation a personal quest.

Such interiorization seems, both to Blithedale's liberal reformers and Habermas, laden with freedoms, specifically the freedom to be unconscious of material inequality. This desire to cloak material conditions beneath heartfelt emotion represents a sublime moment in the psychological privatization of political life.

Disclosure of one last secret, coming long after Coverdale has pried open the histories and hearts of a band of utopian schemers, hardly smacks of political import. After poking into the earthly passions of a prison reformer, a women's rights activist, and a spiritual medium, Coverdale stumbles across his own frustrated erotic devotion to a teenage girl. This personal announcement seemingly represents nothing more than an ironic and pathetic urge to understand the hidden motivations and innermost sympathies that disrupt community. Public presentation of this desire is a very different story—one that politicizes Hawthorne's tale of community. As a narrative that begins with a group of reformers and soon focuses on four of its residents only to end with the confession of just one, the narrator himself, *Blithedale* tells an important story about the death of political life. Hawthorne's romance, in effect, reduces the republican consciousness associated with the public sphere to private desire.¹⁶

Privatization is what Coverdale loves about Priscilla: she offers him reassuring experiences of substituting individual but still universal feelings of love for materially specific (and often messy) understandings of the world. Love is among the many splendored things ahistorical enough to allow interiority to seem equally and generally shared. The citizen's infatuation with private bodies and privacy is an ageold intrigue. Fear of the public sphere stands as a pillar in traditions of Anglo-American citizenship theory, according to Margaret Somers.¹⁷ In her historical sociology of citizenship, Somers shows how liberal democratic societies privilege a metanarrative that overreacts to threats of state tyranny by demonizing forms of associative life. In turn, freedom and politics are elevated-and constrictedto intimate experience, a private affair. Privatization is thus also what Priscilla offers audiences in her mesmeric performances as a psychic prodigy known by her stage name, the "Veiled Lady": she holds out to citizens earthly glimpses of a spiritual realm impenetrable to the clamors of the socius. Coverdale's admission of love for a waif seems unrehearsed and sudden, especially since so much of Blithedale concerns

his erotic musings about Zenobia's mature body and his homoerotic ties to Hollingsworth. By the book's final chapter, however, Coverdale behaves like so many nineteenth-century reformers, philanthropists, and liberal critics preferring disembodied forms to embodied subjects, desiring hermeticism and not the egalitarian possibilities of homosociality, and privileging individual feeling over public life.

This fascination with Priscilla, her body repeatedly described as having "hardly any physique" and "a lack of human substance," betrays the *immaterial* conditions that popularize, idealize, and finally privatize democratic possibility in the United States (34, 185). While critics at least since Marx have rightly emphasized the necessity of attending to material relations, *Blithedale* suggests that equality, especially in its failed U.S. mode, originates in the public sphere's "criteria for generality and abstractness."¹⁸ Generic existence and disembodiment became public spectacle in midcentury culture as the wispy female forms of somnambulists, teenage trance speakers, and hypersensitive mediums took the stage at village lyceums, women's rights conventions, and antislavery fairs. Occult practices popularized mystical experiences of citizenship that pretend to have no debts to material circumstances of privilege or empowerment. At the end of this process of spiritual refinement, citizenship stands transcendent and depoliticized. Erotic energy in the novel turns on references to "magnetism" (134), clairvoyance (47), and "disembodied" presence (6); these shadowy contexts of mesmerism and spiritualism, two related occult "sciences" concerned with the political possibilities of death, advertise young girls like Priscilla as the ideal type of citizen. Clearly, only white men qualified as full citizens until ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, but in a paradoxical privatization of public citizenship, liberal white men desired civic identities modeled on the female medium's disconnection from context and contingency. A popular taxonomy of citizenship emanates from the necromantic, illdefined, and ahistorical conditions of a girlhood that kept company with spirits.

To tame radicals "miscarried by the wild speculations of materialism," as an early nineteenth-century psychic researcher put it, liberal reformers often acted as Coverdale, becoming enamored of bodies that had no substance within the body politic.¹⁹ Bodies that provided the best medium for citizenship turned out to be the most private—

namely, persons caught in the deathlike trance of mesmerism and, later, persons with spiritual affinity for the "electrical" vibrations of the departed. Coverdale's offer of "a slim and unsubstantial girl" (26) as the key to his narrative echoes popular occult discourses that explained the dark facts of inequality by turning to the immaterial conditions forecast by the young women who occupied the center stages of mesmerism and spiritualism. "Wild speculations" about class inequity or racial injustice paled before more intangible and thus less actionable visions of social conditions. Refracted through the protopsychological interest in the unconscious, sociopolitical discourse became caught in a mystic trance, as it were, enraptured with the idea that the hierarchies governing U.S. life transcended worldly causes. What structured a discourse on equality were not simply marketplace realities or the undeniable presence of lower-class and enslaved bodies; what authorized a fantasy of equality were the revelations of trance speakers, the insensible bodies of mesmerized subjects, and the passive wills of spirit mediums. So receptive were citizens to the wonders of the occult that the facticity and grittiness of sociopolitical discourse became sublimated as sociocelestial discourse

Mesmerized Citizens and Spiritualist Politics

Seek . . . the angel-world for the types of a true, social, affectional life. *Plain Guide to Spiritualism* (1863)

New technologies of apperception and communication such as clairvoyance, the "spiritual telegraph," "animal magnetism," and séances attracted popular interest in epistemologies that claimed to render knowledge in utopian and nonhierarchical fashion. "The movement is essentially indigenous and American," opined the *New York Herald* of spiritualism, "bearing the most absolute marks of its democratic and popular origin."²⁰ By 1857, the preface to the anonymous *Zillah*, *the Child Medium*, a novel of erotic clairvoyance and necromancy, could aver that "there are not many families in the Union that do not boast a 'medium' among their members."²¹ While such estimates are no doubt inflated, animal magnetizers and clairvoyants boasted of the occult's democratic popularity, and persons awaiting the ad-

vent of equality seemed easily convinced that the afterlife provided a missing piece to the puzzle of universal emancipation. Members and associates of Hawthorne's own family dabbled in this psychopolitical sphere. His fiancée, Sophia Peabody, sought relief from headaches in the mystic passes of a mesmerist, much to the novelist's consternation, who feared that this little understood practice would expose his future wife to psychological violation. Years later, his children's governess announced herself a writing medium capable of transcribing messages sent from beyond the grave.²²

Although Hawthorne viewed such activities with distrust, many of his fellow cultural critics — including those he joined at Brook Farm looked to mesmerism, especially as it was later incorporated into spiritualist practices, as a means of realizing "the Jacksonian era's belief in the ultimate perfectibility of society through the progressive improvements of its citizens."²³ As clairvoyants and sleepwalkers proved receptive to vibrations from the "other side," more and more whites in the United States doubled as mediums between the public and heavenly spheres: by 1863, not uncoincidentally a point during the Civil War when families increasingly saw brothers, fathers, sons, and husbands enter the spirit realm, one promoter of supernatural activity estimated that "at this date 2,500,000 [persons] . . . have arrived at their convictions of spiritual communication, from personal experience" (see figure 8).²⁴ Blithedale both anticipates and documents this fascination with ghostly disembodiment. Like the novel's selfconfessed minor poet and ardent philanthropist whose sexual interests ultimately settle on the undeveloped body of Priscilla rather than the voluptuous corporeality of Zenobia, at the nexus of animal magnetism and spiritualism, abolitionists, women's rights activists, and other liberal critics of the nation privileged a virginal history unburdened by contradiction or complexity.

As somnambulic trances increased in frequency and popularity, the dead outlined an occult public sphere for U.S. democracy. Mediums spoke with key political leaders of the national past and received descriptions of everlasting liberty. Encouraged perhaps by the efforts of the Franklin Pierce first family to contact a son who had died in a railroad accident, one senator in 1854 introduced a petition signed by 15,000 constituents asking Congress to investigate otherworldly communication. The president's ghost son was successfully married in a

"PHYSICAL DEMONSTRATIONS."*



8 Although the widespread incidence of mediumship and clairvoyance suggests popular interest in immaterial forces, many skeptics portrayed such paranormal activities as a mixture of anti-Christian and fraudulent practices. Hiram Mattison's *Spirit Rapping Unveiled!* lampoons the sedate and unconscious female medium as channeler of spiritual forces that produce havoc and consternation. Her neighbors sit aghast as a pair of fireplace tongs, a table, and a stout gentleman float around the room. (Source: Hiram Mattison, *Spirit Rapping Unveiled! An Exposé of the Origin, History, Theology, and Philosophy of Certain Alleged Communications from the Spirit World, by Means of "Spirit Rapping," "Medium Writing," "Physical Demonstrations," etc., with Illustrations [New York: Mason Brothers, 1853].)*

spirit ceremony to the infant soul of Katie Eaton, who died at the age of three weeks, but senators laughed at the idea of asking the Committee on Foreign Relations to establish contact with emissaries from the other side.²⁵ Despite congressional mockery of spiritual suggestions, the occult continued to influence and structure politics. In ghostly chats with departed figures such as Franklin, Jefferson, and Webster on concrete topics such as labor laws, temperance, tariffs, antislavery fairs, and the Fugitive Slave Law, sleepwalking subjects never failed to

speak in an idiom that was at core ahistorical, abstracted, and universalized. Issues inviting debate and conflict were easily resolved once divested of substance and specificity: politics became spectral in an occult public sphere.²⁶ But as it spiritualizes sociopolitical arenas, the occult frames a civic demeanor that exalts passivity and disconnection. While mesmerism and spiritualism often intersected with pressing issues of race, class, gender, and national destiny, their structure and style blocked democratic critique by displacing sociopolitical agitation to a psychospiritual realm of eternal consensus. The occult public sphere works by contradiction, engaging politics and social conflicts only to disencumber citizens of sociopolitical consciousness.

Because an occult public sphere orients inquiry around invisible psychological matters, Jacksonian democracy might be rethought to question how active and democratic its democratic activity was. Impassioned rhetoric about slavery as literal Southern bondage and metaphoric intemperance, white industrial labor, and physiological vice suggests the era's political vibrancy. If ever a golden age of the U.S. public sphere existed, according to Michael Schudson, it appeared at these moments. These nineteenth-century instances, as Mary Ryan adds, were characterized by a "raucous, contentious, and unbounded style of debate" that makes the public sphere in U.S. incarnations seem a far cry from an enlightened zone of rational consensus.²⁷ Amid the improbability of distilling an ideal bourgeois public from the unruly stir of civic life, the public sphere seems less a historical fact and more a political effect that turns private bodies into public members. As a political operation, then, the public sphere outstrips incrustations attached to specific persons by privileging "human beings pure and simple," to return to Habermas's phrase. Mesmerism and spiritualism advance this dematerializing agenda in ways that represent not a historical deviation to the public sphere but its theoretical fulfillment. By valuing (un)consciousness over corporeality and prioritizing psychic interiority over sociopolitical awareness, the occult represses material conditions and national divisions in search of inward truths and higher spiritual unity. Clairvoyance and somnambulism model citizenship. A psychosocial discourse of passivity and abstraction disputes the historical narrative of Jacksonian activism. If citizens were active, they were active in producing political passivity. The occult, like the

bourgeois public sphere under Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's critique, excluded "substantial life interests." Following the cues of mesmerism and spiritualism, a more perfect democracy lay not in redressing material inequities but in explaining hierarchy as an effect of an immaterial set of conditions.

Social and literary activists such as Harriet Martineau, Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Lloyd Garrison, Amy and Isaac Post, and Lydia Maria Child underwent mesmeric therapy or attended séances as part of a political faith that sought to transcend politics itself.²⁸ Discovery of a spiritual telegraph uniting this world to the other side augured the cessation of striving with material conditions of embodiment, racial oppression, marketplace anxiety, and gender inequality. The heroine of T. S. Arthur's Agnes; or, the Possessed, a Revelation of Mesmerism (1848) happily triumphs over the material world once she is magnetized. Pained by a decaying tooth, yet too squeamish to face extraction of her molar, Agnes undergoes hypnosis and placidly submits to treatment. "Not a muscle stirred! . . . [T]he expression of her face was all unchanged," reports an excited and no longer dubious witness of the mesmerist's skill.²⁹ Modeled probably on an 1836 account in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal in which a French immigrant named Charles Poyen hypnotized a twelve-year-old girl prior to dental surgery, Agnes's experience produces a fantasy that is at once psychological and political: bodies (and bodies politic) can become so enthralled with immaterial conditions that trauma and disturbance pass unnoticed.

In a story every bit as erotically charged as Arthur's exposé of spellbound maidens, Hawthorne's *Blithedale* expresses similar distrust of the mystical power that surmounts the free will of another innocent New England girl. Mediums, mesmerists, and enslaving spiritualists sinisterly flit through the utopian undertaking at the novel's center. Psychological mysteries/frauds are not limited to the pandering of the Veiled Lady in exhibitions that polite society would no doubt view as promiscuous. Coverdale imagines that his illness transforms him "into something like a mesmerical clairvoyant" (47); Zenobia reveals that Coverdale's verses have "stolen into my memory, without my exercising any choice or volition about the matter" (15); Priscilla's artless gambols captivate Hollingsworth; Zenobia's artful legend of the

Veiled Lady transfixes Priscilla; and Hollingsworth's effort to galvanize adherents to his reformist scheme causes him to appear a willful magnetizer. Each suggestion of spiritual phenomena and magnetic influence is laden with malignant sympathy, prompting the critical observation that Hawthorne found an uncanny resemblance between the mesmerist and the novelist who seeks to captivate readers.

Analogies between novelist and mesmerist, however, only repeat the privatizing impulse of Coverdale's belated confession of love. Like the mesmerized subject who sits insensible of worldly stimuli and circumstances, the critical focus on psychological events in Hawthorne's novel excludes the material political world portrayed in his art. Thus, for one critic, to appreciate the hypnotic effects of Hawthorne's psychological drama readers must eschew a "social and political perspective" so as to become receptive to "Hawthorne's understanding of the compulsion hidden in the human psyche." 30 This evaluation misses the point that attention to intimate relations rests on privileges of privacy. Like the magnetized patient immune to external influenceeven a dentist's scalpel—and like the medium who becomes somnolent in order to receive messages from the dead, critical readings that personalize politics do so at the risk of eclipsing history, especially embodied histories. Discussions of Blithedale address how designs of the would-be utopians harm the psychological self, in the process ignoring how bodies at Blithedale farm have a political substantiality that extends beyond self to impinge on other social actors all the while being shaped by antecedent histories of forgery, poverty, and sex. The problem of such readings is the same as that of Coverdale's narrative: as Lauren Berlant argues, Coverdale gives "priority to individual history," thereby obscuring and deanimating the contentiousness that textures a complex communal (or national) history.³¹

Whether the explanation is love (as with Coverdale), the presence of disembodied spirits (as with citizen-mediums), or inner psychological workings (as with a literary critical focus on the "human psyche"), each interpretation bears witness to the enduring sway of nonsocial thinking. Unrequited love neatly explains away tension and distrust within a community like Blithedale. Loving an insubstantial girl over a socially critical woman like Zenobia proves easier than grappling with gender inequality and economic disparity. How better to ignore

political antagonism than to become enraptured with a young girl's messages from the dead so that citizens can ignore the inarticulate protests of the living? As the disembodied soul of William Penn, speaking through a medium, revealed the same year as *Blithedale*'s publication,

In the spirit life all contention ceases; even those who were undeveloped, when they enter, feel no disposition to contend; and those who progress have far nobler attainments in prospect, than contending either about imaginary or real differences; and, I advise all who are clothed with bodies, to abstain from doubtful disputations. . . . I see no better way, than for the friends of progress to become as passive as possible, and quietly wait.³²

Political lessons emerge from the other side: brotherly love is secured by "passive" citizenship. Democracy becomes ideal precisely when it can no longer be called democratic, when it no longer derives from dialogue and difference.

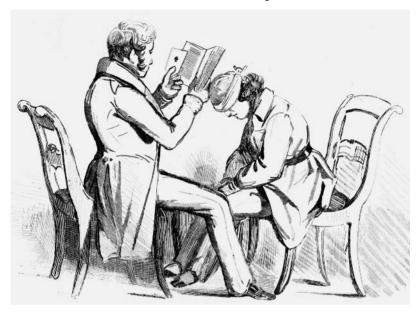
Along with the confluences of the unconscious and otherworldly revelation, an occult public sphere makes literal Marx's early critique of bourgeois democracy as "spiritualist." The person interpellated by democracy seems a ghost of the embodied historical subject; the "modern spiritualist democratic representative state" mobilizes a brand of citizenship that discards nonpolitical aspects of identity.³³ Much as the public sphere minimizes Negt and Kluge's "substantial life interests" and other palpable historical conditions, citizenship depends on a democratic will-to-amnesia that overlooks specific differences by pointing to larger psychospiritual affinities. "For the nineteenthcentury state, the public sphere corresponds to this heaven of ideas," they write.34 The private workings of community, whether as utopian farm or nineteenth-century state, collapse the stark oppositions between heavenly and historical spheres. But rather than abject the private as nonpolitical, U.S. democracy celebrates privacy as an ideal political posture. In order for this spectral, publicly dead person to appear, the embodied subject must lose a good deal of historical weight.

Ahistorical Performances of Utopia BROOK FARM AND BLITHEDALE

Why deny the soul the faculty of recognizing external objects through unusual ways, without the help of the senses, and of annihilating time and space?—*Letter to Doctor A. Brigham, on Animal Magnetism* (1837)

Integral to mesmerism and idealized by spiritualism, abstracted bodies redefined public culture as a vaporous sphere of insensibility. Not that animal magnetizers, trance speakers, charlatans, and séance leaders offered a compact or consistent theory as they toured lecture halls and gave public demonstrations. Inegalitarianism and skewed hierarchies did not evaporate in an arena of disencumbered souls, although the assurance that "government is patriarchal" in the spirit sphere no doubt implied that ethereal institutions, like earthbound domestic ones, were on the right track.³⁵ As séances allowed the dead to contact departed family members, and mediums learned of postmortem accords between rivals such as Calhoun and Clay, traces of political antagonism seemed to vanish. The mediumistic endeavors of citizens belabored a disembodied subject generic enough to reconcile all sorts of diverse interests-evangelical, feminist, sentimental, abolitionist, or erotic. Bodies like those of twelve-year-old Katherine Fox, who received antislavery messages from the dead, or even the more mature Harriet Martineau, who averred that "mesmeric treatment alone" cured debilitating illness, represented the unconscious as a new half-understood frontier in human progress.³⁶ One thing, however, was certain at these mystical limits: psychological demonstrations and spiritual manifestations that ranged from faddish public entertainment to intimate séances were inexplicable in concrete historical terms.

This impenetrability upholds the image of a national community whose structures of governance are beyond explanation or change. Psychological experiments in animal magnetism, spirit séances, and clairvoyance conjured immaterial conditions that had real effects in sustaining hierarchy and privilege. Virginal yet enslaved to another's will, blindfolded yet able to see and locate objects, alive yet an as-



9 The remarkable powers of clairvoyant perception emerge from the magnetic connection of mesmerist and medium. Such transcendent insight could be explained by its cultivation of trance and biological stasis. Somnambulism, as many witnesses of animal magnetism and psychic researchers averred, promised to open up the mysteries of the unconscious by approximating death. (Source: Chauncy Hare Townshend, *Facts in Mesmerism, with Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It* [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1843].)

sociate of the dead, mesmerized and spiritualized bodies validated a governing paradox of U.S. public life (see figure 9). Citizens learned to associate passivity and unresponsiveness with democratic virtue; popular psychic rituals taught that privatization best conditioned one to public life. Akin to the antislavery equations of liberty and death examined in chapter I, the occult asked individuals to seek an identity "annihilating time and space," to yearn for a tranquil repose in which disconnection masqueraded as self-control. Among the Blithedalers, this yearning manifests itself in desires for "Priscilla's lack of earthly substance" (188): Coverdale, Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and the charlatan mesmerist Westervelt, despite their difference in humani-

tarian commitment and social position, seek contentment in a maiden body saturated with impressions of death. Pricilla's rigid, unresponsive body excites and temporarily unifies reformers and opportunists by suppressing the material differences between them. Her public performance as a corpse dramatizes citizenship as an act of political necrophilia. Ghostly attractions deactivate membership in democratic community.

Priscilla's insubstantiality is most palpably felt in the village hall, the public space where high and low cultures meet. With entertainment ranging from "the itinerant professor [who] instructs separate classes of ladies and gentlemen," a reference to health reformers like Mary Gove and Sylvester Graham, to an edifying "choir of Ethiopian melodists," the lyceum both constructs and reflects popular interests (196). On this stage before an economically diverse audience, Priscilla surfaces as the Veiled Lady—only to remain impervious to its democratic "clamor." As proof of her resistance to all material tarnish,

several deep-lunged country-fellows, who looked as if they might have blown the apparition away with a breath, ascended the platform. Mutually encouraging one another, they shouted so close to her ear, that the veil stirred like a wreath of vanishing mist; they smote upon the floor with bludgeons; they perpetrated so hideous a clamor, that methought it might have reached, at least a little way, into the eternal sphere. Finally, with the assent of the Professor [Westervelt], they laid hold of the great chair, and were startled, apparently, to find it soar upward, as if lighter than the air through which it rose. But the Veiled Lady remained seated and motionless, with a composure that was hardly less than awful, because implying so immeasurable a distance betwixt her and these rude persecutors. (202)

Priscilla transcends the hardy specimens of New England independence; insensibility tokens freedom from discordant accents of lowerclass life. The "distance" expressed by her nonresponsiveness reveals a social ladder with her own squalid history as a motherless seamstress surely among the bottom rungs. Now, however, lack of bodily response and mimicry of death open a breach between her and her past as well as the overembodied rural folk come to town for a night's entertainment. As the Veiled Lady, her virtue is that she belongs neither to a past nor people. Her reaction is invisibly psychological, and as such,

it spiritualizes "bludgeons" and other material emblems of class consciousness, making the base purposes of Westervelt's spectacle seem incidental to the airy insubstantiality of an adolescent girl. The Veiled Lady performs what Habermas calls "audience-oriented privacy," unfolding her interiority in public as she conveys the lesson that private bodies can appear in public, not if they abide by "general and abstract laws" but if they themselves are generic and abstracted.³⁷

Coverdale obsesses about Priscilla's unattainable body because sexuality-even if hers is a sexuality he will never know intimatelyoccludes complex social conditions. "Sexuality provides for him an epistemology, a conventional and stabilizing structure of interpretation," writes Berlant of Coverdale.³⁸ Much as the Veiled Lady withstands "rude" intrusions of the folk, Coverdale, by virtue of his notso-virtuous fascination with Blithedale's women and their sexual histories, withstands class-based associations that would force him to confess that the storied egalitarianism of Blithedale is just that-a story of democracy that conceals inequality. In her trance, the Veiled Lady discerns a region where particularity and difference fade. "She beholds the Absolute!" says Westervelt in a bit of staged enthusiasm (201). Although his report of what the Veiled Lady sees in her "communion with the spirit world" (201) lacks the exhaustiveness of outof-body visions found in volumes such as Dealings with the Dead (1861-1862) or Voices from the Spirit World (1852), Westervelt's brief description does contain information-or better still, a lack of information—that mystifies the public sphere. For the subject beneath the veil, "the limitations of time and space have no existence" (201); consciousness becomes ahistorical and abstracted. The mesmerist proclaims "an era that would link soul to soul . . . into one great, mutually conscious brotherhood" (200). Surely an egalitarian thought of utopian dimension – but Coverdale can no more forget his social superiority over someone like the pretender Westervelt any more than he can relinquish hierarchical tendencies while sequestered at Blithedale. Coverdale fails to understand that the earthly presence of the mesmerist is indispensable to Priscilla's sublime show. Coverdale's awareness of "a cold and dead materialism" heightens the Veiled Lady's disembodiment; the poet is duped by his own distaste for Westervelt into idealizing Priscilla's estrangement. Westervelt traffics a teenage femininity that he intentionally links to his own dandified masculinity. In

the pairing of mesmerist and medium, the audience grasps the contradiction of "the actual presence of a disembodied spirit as anything that stagecraft could devise" (201), an animation of the deathlike conditions that render context, history, and contingency meaningless.

The Veiled Lady embodies-or more accurately, disembodies-Habermas's assertion that the "bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public." ³⁹ Yet the public that gathers is made up of political zombies who are alive as an audience though dead as historical actors invested with the particularity of memory and subjectivity. Priscilla enacts this death for a fee: her sublime disconnection signals how citizens who enter the public transcend and forget the sources of privilege that allow their abstraction as a public in the first place. The Veiled Lady theatricalizes historical consciousness so that it loses substance. Her spellbound body suggests that the most desirable way to appear in public is as a private body. In her isolated insensibility, she reenacts a social drama that the communitarians at Blithedale have been playing all spring and summer: as Coverdale remarks, the utopian scheme sets out to give voice to "blithe tones of brotherhood" by breaking with "the weary tread-mill of the established system" (12, 19). Not that "brotherhood" is a nefarious goal, but Coverdale's catachrestic use of a "tread-mill" to substitute for society turns on a mandarin aversion to work and labor. The reformers seek "brotherhood" by forgetting, rather than addressing, the material accents that clash with idealistic "tones." They pretend that class differences do not exist even though the first common meal that seats dandies from town next to laborers from the field creates an "oppressive" awkwardness (25). Like Priscilla, they feign unconsciousness and sleepwalk past historical conditions that create social division.

Affected annihilations of class consciousness surface in the history of Brook Farm, the utopian community that Hawthorne joined and later used as a model for Blithedale. In an invitation to Emerson to buy into the Fourierist project, Brook Farm's founder, George Ripley, drew attention to inequities of labor only to resolve these inequities by subtly forgetting them:

Our objects, as you know, are to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker

and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, adapted to their tastes and talents . . . to do away with the necessity of menial services. . . . Thought would preside over the operations of labor, and labor would contribute to the expansion of thought; we should have industry without drudgery, and true equality without vulgarity.⁴⁰

Although Ripley desires to bridge a social gulf, his language remains elitist, suspicious of the physicality of labor cast as "drudgery" and "vulgarity." Couched in terms that reify humans on the basis of work, Ripley's vision adheres to typical assumptions about workers who do not think and intellectuals who do not work. Citizens tethered to a treadmill have no time to meditate on "brotherhood." When Brook Farm drafted a constitution in 1844, the language of universalism made the forgetting of class consciousness and economic grievances complete: "From this document . . . we propose a radical and universal reform, rather to redress any particular wrong or remove the sufferings of any single class of human beings."⁴¹ Declaring inconsequential the "particulars" of oppressed groups, the associationists overlooked historically based inequities that cause a "single class" to be singled out as the slighted recipient in the circulation of goods, resources, and justice. Spiritual unity silences concerns about material inequity. In gauging the effects of mediumistic revelation, Modern Spiritualism (1855) echoed the logic of Brook Farm's constitution: "It [spiritualism] has, undoubtedly, a tendency to liberalize and enlighten, and to bring together all minds on the one point of immortality. Thus united on one subject . . . it will, almost of necessity, produce, ultimately, more harmony than has heretofore existed in the liberal world."42 Liberalism in its occult mode encourages a final estrangement of private persons from public conflict. Within this inert consensus, the necessary antagonism of democratic life ceases: spiritualized citizens do not advert death but rather, in a necrophilic impulse, court an identity that is as posthumous as it is postpolitical.

The spectral opposes embodiments of history by etherealizing utopia's material conditions. Hawthorne, for one, dematerialized his own work at Brook Farm. The laborer that milked cows and hoed potatoes, he wrote to Sophia Peabody in September 1841, was a "Spectre" and "not thy husband."⁴³ No wonder, then, that the Blithedalers play at

scenes of transcendence, recasting farmwork as "the spiritualization of labor" (65). It is Priscilla who best performs the spectral, however. As a medium in Westervelt's séance, she dramatizes the evacuation of history at the center of the public sphere. Her past a mystery and her body evanescent, the Veiled Lady acquires "many of the privileges of a disembodied spirit" (6). The precise nature of these "privileges" Coverdale does not specify, although his declaration of love speaks volumes about just how attractive he finds her ability to linger in forgetfulness of the village hall's lower-class accents and other social contexts.

The occult – as the airy stuff of public spectacle – enacts Marx's famous formulation in 1852, the same year as the publication of Blithedale, that "the spirits of the past" shroud historical consciousness by forgetting the material conditions that structure the past. But whereas Marx toys with spectral allusions to argue for the inescapability of historical conditions, Coverdale looks to Priscilla's disembodiment to prevent recognition of any such contingency. "Men [sic] make their own history," as Marx reminds us, but "they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past."44 Priscilla permits Coverdale and the rest of the lyceum audience to admit the first part of Marx's dictum only to reject the latter: citizens certainly make their own history, but they believe themselves freed of boisterous shouts and other material circumstances. The Veiled Lady sits on stage as the disembodiment of history, placid and unmoving, her wispy transparency the very stuff of an ideology that mystifies hierarchical social structures by turning to the spiritual.

The Trance

WOMEN'S PRIVACY AS THE PERFORMANCE OF CITIZENSHIP

The mesmeric state is a far truer image of death than sleep is. — Facts in Mesmerism (1843)

Priscilla is not simply a character in Hawthorne's private theater. She is the darling of public culture. "The Veiled Lady might be called a figure for the disembodiment of women in nineteenth-century do-

mesticity," argues Richard Brodhead.⁴⁵ Relegated to the home and admonished to repress corporeality, women entered the public sphere as representatives of the spiritual world. Magnetically receptive girls found a public forum in mesmeric demonstrations and séances that allowed them to sleepwalk in public, as it were, safely sheltered by the guises of privacy and maiden reserve. Rendered somnolent by magnetic influence, Cynthia Ann Gleason sat unflinching as examining committees shook her, pricked her with pins, and even discharged revolvers by her ears. Fourteen-year-old Helen Temple calmly sketched out millennial justice in her role as a trance speaker, telling audiences "bound in chains, but not everlasting chains" to cheer up for soon "the spirits of angels shall tear asunder the chains of your souls." 46 Perhaps the most famous mediums, the teenage Fox sisters left their village in upstate New York to take up residence in Barnum's Hotel in Manhattan and conduct public séances. Mesmerized girls and other clairvoyants provided unimpeachable evidence of spirit communication: who would dare think that chaste innocents would foist a fraud on the public? The Home Journal in 1855 was careful to note "the two Misses Fox" were "virgins." 47 Lacking sexual pasts, the girls appeared in public as beings abstracted beyond the touch of history. Priscilla and her real-world counterparts calmed political imaginations by liberating public life from the specificity of social context and particulars of democratic debate.

In the space where the occult, gender, and democracy overlap, civic freedom seems at risk from politics. Citizens had difficulty attaining unalloyed freedom, said the disembodied souls channeled through young female mediums, because they searched for political virtue in all the wrong places, turning to material forms as opposed to spiritual incarnations. Weighted down by historicity and referentiality, bodies experienced freedom as hemmed in by social inequality, physical reflex, and institutional position. But "in the state above," the 1853 spiritualist volume *Messages from the Superior State* revealed, "there is the most PERFECT EQUALITY." ⁴⁸ Still the question remained: How can such divine emancipation for worldly citizens be realized? The trick was to shelter human actors from earthly stimuli so that the impact of gender, physiology, ancestry, and the marketplace became negligible. Mesmerism and spiritualism freed the human body from all the uncontrollable particularities—sensory perception, genealogy,

economic necessity—that impinged on consciousness. The answer to emancipation, then, fused a Habermasian image of political life to the occult: the public sphere summoned a dematerialized identity so ghostly as to seem abstract and general. Mesmerism prepared the stage for Priscilla and her cohorts by discovering a psychological process as opposed to a public, political one—that made the citizen resistant to culture. As clairvoyants honed hypnosis to perfect mediumship, they reported an ability to "see the spirit, the spirit emancipated, *emancipated* from this mortal body . . . [and] see the shackles as they fall." ⁴⁹

Not this freedom of fallen shackles but its loss to psychic slavery prompted Hawthorne's concern over Sophia's visits to an animal magnetizer. The "sacredness of an individual is violated by it [mesmerism]; there would be an intrusion into the holy of holies-and the intruder would not by thy husband!" Hawthorne warned Sophia.50 Episodes of dangerous eroticism from Holgrave's spellbinding effect on Phoebe in The House of the Seven Gables to Westervelt's mastery over the Veiled Lady in Blithedale further reveal Hawthorne's preoccupation with mesmerism as a libidinous sham. He was not alone in inveighing against the emancipatory discourse of the spirit as an enslaving practice of sexual dimensions. His moral conservatism found him colleagues among the popular scribblers he disdained. Psychic violation, abduction, derangement, jilted lovers, and sexual slavery are just some of mesmerism's effects in Arthur's sensation novel, Agnes. Better known for lurid temperance tales, Arthur's 1848 shocker dramatized Hawthorne's worst fears in its story of a demure New England heroine "carried off by a mesmerizer against her consent, and kept the slave of his will for a period of weeks!" The villain in question is a French immigrant, named not Poyen but Florien, who threatens to transport his subject to New Orleans in an echo of that city's infamous sexual traffic in quadroon and octoroon women. After idealizing passivity to the extent of submitting to the magnetizer's exploitation, Agnes bemoans her psychological distress as a matter of political despair: "I have lost my freedom! I am enslaved by a power that is wonderful in its mysterious potency." ⁵¹ How is it that what so many viewed as an emancipatory technology was suspiciously regarded by Hawthorne and Arthur as spiritual bondage? Each writer's fascination with the gothic kept the body's vulnerability in mind-often an excited state

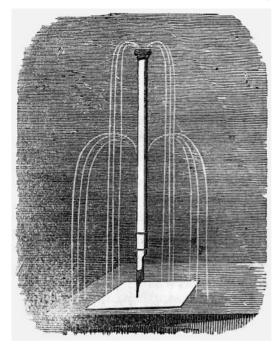
of mind. Whereas female mediums captivated audiences because their bodies seemed freed of all social stimulus, neither Hawthorne nor Arthur were able to forget erotic stimuli that seemed to compromise the independence of young women.

Nervousness about the body attracts men to the unexcitable trance of women, a spectacle of tranquil femininity that seems socially naked. Coverdale brings his recollections to a close by moving from Zenobia's dead body to Priscilla's spiritual one, neither of which he can possibly arouse. The male hero of Agnes improves on Coverdale's methods by realizing the female medium's passivity as the cure for the exercise of masculinity as mania. Consumed for the whole novel with his fiancée's sexual innocence, Arthur's hero at last succumbs to dementia. To save this specimen of distraught masculinity, however, Agnes must also resort to animal magnetism and mesmerize her lover: "Your life depends upon your freedom from excitement." 52 In a world of undue mental excitement, the citizen's survival lies in negative liberty ("freedom from") modeled around a spectacle of passivity. Male life in the public sphere "depends upon" the emulation of women's privacy. It is not just that women in the nineteenth century endure and enjoy privacy; men as citizens also survive the public sphere by acting as mesmerized and spiritualized women. To Teresa Goddu's insight that "the medium acted out women's private position in antebellum America," it can be added that women's privacy framed and quieted manhood by performing citizenship as a scene of disengagement.⁵³ Women's insensibility packs lessons on how to appear in public without becoming politically agitated. Taking ideological cues from gendered notions of privacy, an occult public sphere limits the citizen to negative liberty with the promise of a political identity freed from historical specificity and material embeddedness. Within the story of a vibrant nineteenth-century democracy runs a history of occult practices that creates the public sphere as a tomblike zone of unresponsive repose and invulnerable privacy.

Despite contempt for bodily stimulus, psychospiritual researchers felt the pulse, grabbed the knees, and probed beneath the dresses of female mediums. With speculation as invasive as Coverdale's rummaging through his companions' pasts at Blithedale, investigators subjected the bodies of spirit rappers and somnambulists to intense scrutiny. But unlike Coverdale, who is dismayed to discover sexual in-

trigue beneath the bold ideals of his fellow reformers, even skeptical witnesses of spiritual phenomena could detect no physical contrivances to unmask disembodied spirits as worldly frauds. This lack of artifice enticed U.S. males away from their own complexly entailed identities and toward the necrophilic promise of young girls' supposedly ahistorical bodies. Such male passion should not be confused with sexual desire *for* passive, disempowered subjects; instead, their desire was *to be like* these girls, protected from labor and alienated from heterogeneous participation in community. Girlhood provided male citizens with models of public transparency.

To authenticate the wonders of a spiritual realm stripped of all social effects, clairvoyants were themselves stripped and searched to ensure that no hidden devices produced the ghostly knocks. Doubters alleged that "this mysterious rapping was so intimately connected with the persons of these girls, that were they thoroughly examined, sans cu*lottes*, the ghost would stand out in base relief." ⁵⁴ Just as plebeian aversion to the knee-length breeches of the French aristocracy came to symbolize radical republicanism, so too the medium's veiled body suggested a threat to U.S. religious institutions. Traditionally minded citizens, especially clergy, dubbed spirit rapping the "red republican project of making every man [sic] his own evangelist."⁵⁵ Supporters, however, averred that raps and other paranormal phenomena such as elevating tables, floating musical instruments, and the appearance of semitransparent hands tokened a pure social order unmarred by dissension or disruption (see figure 10). Much like Westervelt hawking the wonders of the Veiled Lady, New York Tribune editor Horace Greeley declared of the Fox sisters, "The ladies say that they are informed that this is but the beginning of a new era, or economy, in which spirits clothed in the flesh are to be more closely and palpably connected with those who put on immortality." 56 But the flesh remained treacherous for a public worried about hearing echoes of revolutionary France in Greeley's epoch of an ideal speech community that bridged different socioeconomic — and celestial — spheres. Surely political radicalism and fraud demanded exposure, but the very conservatism that created anxiety over what might be hidden beneath the skirts of fourteen-year-old girls also bowed to the rules of polite society that men not conduct such a delicate search. Accordingly, "a committee of Ladies . . . took the young women into a room, dis-



10 In cases of writing mediumship, the pen could levitate on its own to scratch out messages. Especially popular were instances of pens seized by departed U.S. political leaders who sought to communicate with earthbound citizens. (Source: John W. Edmonds and George T. Dexter, *Spiritualism, with an Appendix by Nathaniel P. Tallmadge*, 4th ed. [New York: Partridge and Brittan, 1853].)

robed them and examined their persons."⁵⁷ While the matrons unsuccessfully searched for concealed devices as the source of otherworldly noises, knockings reverberated from doors, tables, and walls. Here, then, was naked nature: clothed with no cultural attributes other than childhood innocence, the Fox sisters conveyed messages from disembodied souls as pure magnetic energy (see figure 11).

A ghostly political valence is preserved in the histories of young women who inhabited an occult public sphere. In *Animal Magne-*



II Kate Fox, who communicated with the departed via a "spiritual telegraph" discovered with her sisters in their New York farmhouse. (Source: Emma Hardinge Britten, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits* [1869; reprint, New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1970].)

tism in New England (1837), Charles Poyen explains how necromantic passes throw Cynthia Ann Gleason into a somnambulic state. The mesmerized subject falls into a deathly repose that bespeaks a thoroughly noncultural identity. As a paradoxical lesson in citizenship, her privatized body is trotted out for public exhibition. Newspapers, affidavits, and medical reports described Gleason's immobility in ways that insinuated how privacy best prepares body and self to associate with others by dissociation. Once hypnotized, Gleason embodies a sublime civic posture:

The first signal given, was "not to feel." . . . The feather was carried along her lips and nostrils; no effect was produced. . . . [Next, the mesmerist is asked to] cause the somnambulist to feel. Immediately she began to move her lips, raised her hands, and brushed the feather off. The contrary signal was given, and she became as insensible as before. Several trials very severe, such as pinching her hands and feet, pulling her hair, were executed upon her, and she gave no sign of sensibility.⁵⁸

Her estrangement, likened by the Boston Recorder to "a state of mimic death," promised that white middle-class males could ascribe to a spectral citizenship untroubled by the struggles of political fort/daall without resorting to the drastic course of slave suicide lovingly detailed in antislavery literature.⁵⁹ The dead white men who spoke to mediums relished disembodiment because it quieted masculine anxieties about survival in the marketplace: "I feel that my knowledge, since I left my body, has greatly increased, for I now am free from much that used to claim my attention-that of providing for my own and my family's sustenance." 60 Freed of the material body, white middle-class men could become unconscious of economic anxiety. According to a spectral politics, independence derived not from a masculinist fantasy of power and control but from an alienation that distanced subjects from palpable histories of the everyday. The figure that secured this depoliticization was the young female medium for, as all respectable people in the United States knew, girls were too innocent to be aroused by touches of history.

Citizens desired to become like children, specifically little girls, whose disfranchisement was never a question. Because they offered identities "not yet bruised by history," to use Lauren Berlant's phrase, the private lives of little girls projected pure, undefiled public citizenship.⁶¹ Desire pervades the testimony of white men describing encounters with unmarried, magnetized women. Strangely enough, their accounts do not express a longing to possess the mesmerist's seductive influence but rather to become like that young girl whose corporeal history has been erased and whose temporal consciousness has been suspended by making her privy to eternity. Though spellbound women might appear indelicately bound to the magnetizer's will, just as Hawthorne and Arthur suspected, medical experts

doubted that a medium like Cynthia Ann Gleason "could have been aroused by any means whatever."⁶²

Such inadvertent commentary on female frigidity and male inefficacy betrays the necrophilic fascination of citizens laboring to liberate freedom from all contingency. *Animal Magnetism in New England* includes testimony from one rapt observer of Gleason's trance:

Standing before that senseless body—that faintly-breathing, half-living corpse, I questioned more deeply within myself, than ever before, what is the soul? And what are the true laws of its action and existence? . . . I feel, and there was consolation in this feeling, that God and eternity are the only answer to these mysterious phenomena—these apparitions of the Infinite and Unknown. . . . There was something in it too tranquil for a sigh. It was like the breathing which we sometimes witness in a sleeping child, when its whole being lies melted into one delicious sense of deepest and sweetest repose.

He [Poyen] now ceased magnetizing her by external operations. Her hands grew cold, her pulse quick and tremulous. No impression could now be made upon her senses; she was dumb and deaf, and dead to all except her magnetizer! The warm principle of Life, which gives sensation to every nerve, was temporarily withdrawn from its cage of clay, and left it almost as cold and inanimate as the empty sepulchre of the risen Spirit.⁶³

Somnambulism freezes social as well as biological processes. Gleason sits passive before a group of male investigators, and despite this compromising situation, she retains her innocence and purity. Her "cold and inanimate" form excites witnesses of mesmerist phenomena because it is unexcitable. This "delicious" impersonation of death entices professional men by transcending the necessity of historical consciousness. Necrophilic desire for the "half-living corpse" originates from representations of death, which according to Carol Christ, produce a "crepuscular, abstract imagery that minimizes referentiality."⁶⁴ This vacant imprecision textures the biography of the citizen with emptiness. Necrophilia in the United States pivots on a political desire to narrate the citizen's life story as a morbid tale in which passivity secures belonging in an "Infinite and Unknown" community. Spectators were amazed that when the somnambulist awakened she had no

memory of what had transpired during her trance. "Complete forgetfulness," claimed Poyen, is the only residue of Gleason's experience.⁶⁵ The half-living corpse induces an amnesia that sets up insensibility as an ideal reflection of masculine citizenship. Dead women are politically erotic for men, bearing a privacy invulnerable to the claims of the past and needs of the present.

Political necrophilia imagined the public sphere as a zone of tranquillity and harmony, not heated debate or uncertain struggle. The sweetness of death guided the citizen beyond the ceaseless frustrations of fort/da politics. As an assembly of spirits told one medium, "We come from the higher life. . . . We come to harmonize things apparently discordant, and out of discords to bring concords."66 With the abatement of social conflict, quietude overcomes the citizen that recalls the serenity reportedly felt by the violator of cadavers. In a notorious case from 1847, a soldier passing a fresh grave "gave [him]self up to the mad embrace of a dead body" after becoming deeply agitated and suffering "palpitations of the heart, general trembling of the body, and a terrible headache." Male somatic distress, in this instance, eases on intimate contact with a dead woman. The female corpse's passivity offers comfort; comparison of this necrophiliac to a "somnambulist," as one investigator suggested, seals the connection among erotic longing, the dead, and public life. Reports that violators of the dead experience "profound sleep, or coma, or trance state . . . [or] a deep unconsciousness" imply that necrophilia satisfies male identifications with a female body that does not respond to stimulus.⁶⁷ Eroticism mediates politics in a morbid and Thanatopic manner: overexcited men find an assuaging negative liberty in dead—and forever nonsocial—women. Like the unhinged hero of Arthur's Agnes whose "life depends upon ... freedom from excitement," the necrophilic citizen desires a body insensible to the stir of the socius.

"Liberation from the body," "souls released from their clay bondage," "emancipation . . . from *spiritual* despotisms," "everlasting freedom," "[selves] emancipated from the bondages, cares, and sorrows, of the mortal state": spiritualist tracts compiled an array of euphemisms for death that betrays the desire to make public life static and unchanging.⁶⁸ The idiom of the occult became expressly political as spiritualism envisioned a citizenry that transcended politics: "According to the Jeffersonian Declaration of Independence and Equality,"

stated the *Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, inalienable rights were meant "not only in a civil sense, but in a social and spiritual sense."⁶⁹ The soul's purity laid bare a disaggregated self severed from social systems and cultural hierarchies. "The spirit which has been set free from the body of one person by death" revealed the half-living corpse as the completion of citizenship.⁷⁰

This completed citizenship serves as a requiem for democratic politics. No need exists for an engaged civic identity once civil institutions are relocated to a celestial base. Under a spiritual regime, "governmental machinery would move easily . . . with little or no friction," reported John Murray Spear, who had already announced his selection as the earthly representative of disembodied political leaders.⁷¹ The first issue of the Spiritual Philosopher predicted a public sphere untroubled by antislavery agitation, sectional animosity, or workers' disputes: "Beholding the beauty, the justice, the harmony and happiness, of the innumerable societies which make up the spheres above, we shall thus learn how to arrange human society, how to attract all from discord, oppression, evil, error, imperfection, and suffering to a state on earth resembling that above." 72 "Human society" demands an overhaul no doubt, but the role human history will play in this reformation is minimized. Although advocates celebrated spiritualism as democratic since everyone had innate clairvoyant potential, what was revealed had a decidedly nonparticipatory cast. With their souls freed, citizens partook of a sociocelestial discourse immune to contention and debate. "With the progressive spirits there are no quarrels," the departed soul of Emanuel Swedenborg told one medium.⁷³ The utopian space of a national public "where there is sufficiency, health, unity, happiness" transcends democracy itself since with all desires met in advance, a citizenry becomes lifeless.74

A Brief History of Girlhood

Nowhere is fascination with an unfeeling, unresponsive subjectivity more evident than in the stir over the adolescent Fox sisters. In March 1848, knockings with no visible source began to disturb the Fox family. Neighbors were called to witness the mysterious sounds, which were never heard without the presence of the two youngest sisters, Mar-

garet and Katherine. A crowd grew around the girls, and someone divined that the raps formed a sort of telegraphic dispatch from the other side. Decoding the number of raps as indications of either yes or no, the Fox family and curious onlookers learned that the noises proceeded from a disembodied spirit, that this spirit was the soul of a murdered peddler whose skeleton lay beneath the cellar floor. As the spirits contacting the Fox sisters increased in number, the rappings acquired a more complex character, issuing antislavery directives, beating out the rhythm of "Hail Columbia," and forecasting the dawn of a utopian era. Messages relayed through the so-called Rochester Knockings soon drew the attention of prominent reformers such as Amy Post and Horace Greeley, who introduced Margaret and Katherine at public exhibitions where, for the price of a quarter, audiences could listen to ghostly rappings (see figure 12).

Though these demonstrations recall Westervelt's display of the Veiled Lady, no country bumpkins mounted the stage to jostle the girls. Instead, respected medical experts watched the girls' faces, placed their feet on pillows, and frisked their persons for hidden devices in order to verify that "liberated spirits" were free of all corporeal trappings. One physician

made observations with a sethescope [*sic*] to ascertain whether there was any movement with the lungs, and found not the least difference when the sounds were made; and there was no kind of *probability of their being made by ventriloquism as some have supposed—and they could not have been made by machinery*.⁷⁵

The failure to detect fraud suggested, at an ideological level, that subjectivities could indeed be emancipated from meanings of embodiment. Within the occult, public identity was neither artificial nor cultural. The socially transparent bodies of the Fox sisters confirmed that citizens could enter the public sphere unburdened, as "*human beings pure and simple*," as Habermas would later argue. Proof of this simplicity was earnestly desired because so many people in the nineteenth-century United States experienced embodiment as a site of regulation and prohibition. Slavery and its aftermath made brutally clear the body's propensity toward unfreedom, while "facts" about sluggish habits, flat noses, sloping foreheads, fleshy lips, and rough hands naturalized pseudobiological interpretations of class hierarchy.



12 The empty chair at this séance is about to be filled by the man standing at the right who has just paid his admission fee. Once he sits down, the circle will be complete, creating a magnet for the spiritual or "electrical" energy of disembodied souls. [Source: Hiram Mattison, *Spirit Rapping Unveiled! An Exposé of the Origin, History, Theology, and Philosophy of Certain Alleged Communications from the Spirit World, by Means of "Spirit Rapping," "Medium Writing," "Physical Demonstrations," etc., with Illustrations.* New York: Mason Brothers, 1853].

Nuances of class pervaded morphology, saturating identity with material reminders that self-reliant men struggled to consider as immaterial. Hence, the envious identification with young girls as prehistorical and noncultural: never enmeshed in the marketplace and too immature for sexual traffic, the Fox sisters as well as the reported hundreds of other child mediums tapped the dead to provide a life without history.⁷⁶

"The normal body can have no history," states Hayden White.⁷⁷ What saddles a body with history in U.S. culture is not biology but biography. Lower-class background, racial heritage, gender "weakness," and signs of moral decrepitude affiliated the bearer with so-

cial types-the poor, women, slaves, masturbators-whose abased place in the national hierarchy had already been secured. Against the body's disturbing semantic richness, the Fox sisters entered the public sphere without guile or artifice—just as they appeared in private. "After the severest tests, under a variety of circumstances, and at various places, for about one year, incontestable evidence addressed to my senses baffled my skepticism, and fully convinced me that they [the rappings] were the production of no human agency," asserted an authority quoted in Singular Revelations (1850).78 Finding no traces of culture or corporeality, investigators gathered all the information they needed about young female mediums: "no human agency" governed spiritual politics. Katherine and Margaret gave performances of an ideal social organization in which messages about abolition and national destiny appeared immanently and without debate. When rapping mediums communicated that the once rabid proslavery but now dead Senator Calhoun favored abolition, when writing mediums produced spirit signatures from Hancock and Franklin, when trance speakers spoke of "the nation's lasting good," politics appeared without explanation or cause - in short, in postpolitical fashion (see figure 13).⁷⁹ Young girls made the most trustworthy representatives of an immanent politics because their putative abstraction from sexual and economic systems guaranteed no cultural residue could stick to their persons.

The idea of the young female medium divested of culture overlooks how girls are culturally gendered as girls. Girlhood preserved the Fox sisters' reputation, in effect ensuring that innocence had no reputation. In public performances, Katherine and Margaret maintained all the purity of private virtue. The author of *Spirit Rapping Unveiled!* (1853) complained of these gender codes as he debunked the knockings:

The rapping media, have up to this time been, and still are, nearly all ladies. A gentleman "rapping medium" has seldom if every been heard of. . . . Why is this? Have the spirits a stronger "electrical affinity" for ladies than for gentlemen? Or is it because ladies would, for certain reasons, be less liable to detection and exposure. Whether the "spirits" think of it or not, we mortals know that their *sex* and *costume* is a fine security against detection.⁸⁰

Step Honkins Adams Rob morris Jewis Mon Richard He 1m Buchen

13 The spirits often signed their names to the political and utopian declarations they transmitted through mediums. The signatures produced at séances were said to correspond to the actual signatures of the deceased in ways that indicated the complete sympathy between medium and spirit. The fact that the signatures between living and dead matched seemed to prove the impossibility not only of forgery but also of spiritualism as a hoax. *Modern American Spiritualism* reproduced the postmortem signatures of such famous men and women as John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson, James and Dolly Madison, Edgar Allan Poe, and George and Martha Washington. (Source: Emma Hardinge Britten, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits* [1869; reprint, New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1970].)

In an era of true womanhood, it would be indelicate to imply that ladies, let alone little girls, had embodied knowledge or material histories. The cultural construction of girls as noncultural is a contradiction that idealizes a public identity inexperienced in the ways of politics.

This political illogic finds embodiment in the consumptive form of Evangeline in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) as she lingers on the border of life and death in some of the novel's most memorable scenes. As a child, she seems innocent of institutional meaning and hierarchical coding; she disregards cultural prescriptions to address master

and slave alike. The "little child is your only true democrat," remarks St. Clare of his daughter. Like any medium who transcends earthly barriers to visit the afterlife, Eva flits across different spheres without regard to social distinctions separating white from black or politically alive persons from the socially dead. Because she conveys a promise of unearthly "love-joy-peace," she finds it easy to consort with a black male slave like Tom in honest and open fashion; no threat exists that her democratic experiment will become intimate physical reality.⁸¹ A half-living corpse who takes several chapters to die, Eva models how the citizen as "true democrat" falls short of embodiment. Noninteractive, unrealizable democracy depends on dematerialization and is secured by death. St. Clare's remark thus also applies to Priscilla, the Fox sisters, and other teenage clairvoyants who spoke at abolitionist meetings and weighed in on national issues to enact a spectral citizenship that, like whatever lay under the skirts of little girls, was invulnerable to culture.

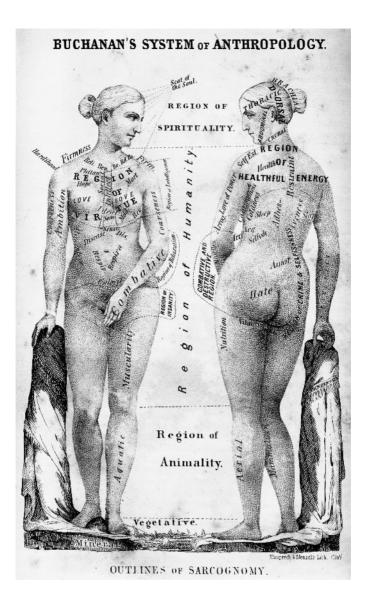
Like St. Clare, Zenobia reflects on the cultural status of girls. She discerns womanhood as a construction that her male compatriots require for fantasies of detachment, psychological as well as political. Her analysis in Blithedale is steeped in contempt, as she observes of Priscilla how an idealized femininity buttresses traditional patriarchal structures: "She is the type of womanhood, such as man has spent centuries in making it" (122). Both as girl and model citizen, the halfliving corpse remains innocent of the sexual knowledge that implicates "womanhood" with associations of historical experience. Men erotically connect to cultural images of motionless and unaroused girls because sexual purity alludes to their own desires for a political subjectivity freed of contingency. To repress the impact of historical context, the citizen must repress the body—an effect repeatedly staged by mesmerist techniques associated with clairvoyance and trance. Mediums gained access to "nervaura or vital emanation" to travel like true democrats, transmigrating across different social strata, racial boundaries, and spiritual planes only after they minimized embodiment and secured "a repose of the basilar organs." 82 Thus theorized Joseph Buchanan in a lengthy physiological-anthropological-mesmerist volume that explained how the somnambulist entered a trance by clamping down on sexuality and sublimating any organs, such as the stomach and genitals, susceptible to ungovernable stimulus. His lectures

diagrammed how a woman's "basilar organs" block entry to a "region of spirituality," keeping her bound to a treadmill of contradictory impulses such as "health" and "disease," "love" and "hate," and "restraint" and "combative" feelings (see figure 14). Indebted to an anatomical system popularized by Graham, Buchanan linked women's gastrointestinal tract and genitals to a "destructive" physicality. As an embodied subject, a woman bears a chaotic self prone to derangement and criminality. The mesmerized subject and clairvoyant, in contrast, disconnects her organs, becoming an exemplary citizen precisely because she has estranged the materiality and historicity lived by her own body.

Veiled Labor

As the somnambulist of Edgar Allan Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" (1844) states, "The senses of my rudimental life are in abeyance, and I perceive external things directly, without organs."⁸³ Mesmerist practice and spiritualist phenomena induce a subjectivity that literalizes Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's portrait of a body impervious to social contexts and material relations—the body without organs. For the authors of *Anti-Oedipus*, the body without organs describes an organism immune to the stimuli that shape subjectivity in accordance with strata of alienation and dominance. It is not that the body without organs resists stratifications of the socius; neither hierarchies of selfhood nor fictions of individuality glom onto this quiescent organism that precedes the cultural formation of the subject.

Seemingly independent of social apparatuses, the body without organs lives as an unmarked subject: "Alone it stands. And in no need of skin, flesh, face or fluid. . . . The subject is what remains when the body is taken away; it is literally inhuman (I am—dead)."⁸⁵ So also reads the fatal pronouncement of the speaker in Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845) who uses animal magnetism to withstand physiological decay: "I say to you that I am dead."⁸⁶ Biological stasis analogizes the inert political consciousness of the modern citizen



14 In pseudoscientific approaches that blended phrenology and animal magnetism, women were idealized as passive and immobile, qualities that increased their capacity to serve as recipients of spiritual revelation. The graffiti on this woman's body registers the difficulties and drawbacks of inhabiting a body marked by culture and history. (Source: Joseph R. Buchanan, *Outlines of Lectures of the Neurological System of Anthropology, as Discovered and Taught in 1841 and 1842* [Cincinnati, Ohio: Buchanan's Journal of Man, 1854].)

who lives beyond history. The dead have the luxury of ignoring the cultural production of something as "natural" as the body, and instead live in an ahistorical fantasy that misrecognizes, among other things, capitalism's impact on subjectivity. This fiction is what Deleuze and Guattari call "antiproduction."⁸⁷ Their argument recapitulates the scornful deconstruction of Priscilla's idealized femininity as the antiproduct of ages of male privilege, exposing innocent girlhood and true womanhood as always enmeshed in economic, historical, and political pathologies. The traditional subject of girlhood, Zenobia maintains, cannot be aroused to respond to this embeddedness. Her ghostly and culturally transcendent body completes the citizen's necrophilic fantasy of a socially dead identity. Zenobia, like Deleuze and Guattari after her, restores context to this subject, remarking on the constructed body that stands prior to the natural one, documenting the loss of history that perfects an amnesiac subject.

But Zenobia's analysis is lost on the men of Blithedale. Coverdale, for one, ends up enamored of Priscilla even though he has devoted his bachelor reveries to Zenobia's bodily organs. As opposed to Zenobia's "not exactly maidenlike" form (47), Priscilla's unstudied innocence promises social harmony. She partakes of a "universally pervasive fluid" (200), as Westervelt puts it in anticipation of Deleuze and Guattari's "amorphous, undifferentiated fluid" that flows against repressive social linkages.⁸⁸ To ensure her social chastity, Hollingsworth discourages questions about Priscilla's past, audiences validate her unfathomable performance as the Veiled Lady, and Coverdale proclaims an unrealizable love for her. Yet a material politics brusquely intrudes on the supposedly transcendent and disconnected sphere of an occult public. Priscilla's public display of privacy and disembodiment is not the only model of citizenship presented in Blithedale. Coverdale comes down to earth when he spitefully allegorizes his acquaintances as the farm's hogs, calling them "greasy citizens," overflowing with "sensual comfort" and "corporeal substance" (144, 143). He naturalizes what he takes to be his moral ascendancy over his fellow utopians by castigating them with animalistic embodiment. Everything is not ideal in an ideal community; the privilege of demeaning others remains intrinsic to Coverdale's exercise of democratic citizenship. Bodies laden with organs, the "four huge black grunters" are irredeemably creatures of production destined for consumption (143). A poet

and a reformer, Coverdale attempts to clean up, to spiritualize, these citizens: watching their heavy-lidded sleep, he interprets the pigs as mediums, as shuttles "betwixt dream and reality," flitting in and out of spheres of consciousness and unconsciousness (144). A voice from the working class disrupts his trancelike reverie as Silas Foster, Blithedale's agricultural laborer, reminds him that the swine will soon be slaughtered, transformed into spareribs and other choice cuts of pork. "Oh, cruel Silas, what a horrible idea!" responds Coverdale, dismayed not so much by the prospect of butchery as the recognition that "natural" bodies are indeed produced, their existence but a function of the demands of consumption (144).

Insistent on unsublimated activities such as eating and husbandry, Silas is one of the novel's most politically significant characters and also one of the most overlooked. In preening over "the little child" as the "true democrat," St. Clare, Coverdale, and other devotees of political necrophilia project a frozen, motionless social order all the while forgetting less well-mannered bodies whose work makes stasis possible. Coverdale's impatience with Silas, matched by literary critics' inattention to Silas's character, reveals a tendency to focus on persons for whom democracy is a leisure while slighting others for whom democracy is something to work at, both a labor and a pleasure. In the same vein as his spiritualization of swine, Coverdale dematerializes the farmer: "The steam arose from his soaked garments, so that the stout yeoman looked vaprous and spectre-like" (18). Echoing the evasion of "manual labor" in George Ripley's Constitution of the Brook Farm Association, Blithedale's resident poet performs his own Westervelt-like sleight of hand in an effort to make work a ghostly presence. Not the Veiled Lady but the Veiled Laborer inspires faith in a perfected social order where citizens are, according to Modern Spiritualism, "freed from all admixture with earth." 89 Priscilla is also a Veiled Laborer, her public performance hiding her manufacture and sale of erotically charged purses. Under the fantasy that production and consumption do not encumber identity, the evasion of materiality pays sociopolitical dividends by cleaning up any traces of exploitation. Within this version of the public sphere re-created as a zone of antiproduction, Priscilla and Silas seem ideal citizens forgetful of social tensions and historical inequities.

Or, at least, that's how Coverdale wishes them to be. Once more

dispelling Coverdale's fantasy of bodies under erasure, Silas jarringly recalls the liberal utopians to the different and unequal positions that underlie the community's fantasy of antiproduction. He makes this appeal without words, instead using bodily stimuli as insistent reminders of the class consciousness sublimated by spiritual democracy. Silas draws attention to the materiality of production and consumption with a brawny literalness that embarrasses Coverdale; that is, the laborer eats:

Grim Silas Foster . . . had been busy at the supper-table, pouring out his own tea, and gulping it down with no more sense of its exquisiteness than if it were a decoction of catnip; helping himself to pieces of dipt toast on the flat of his knife-blade, and dropping half of it on the table-cloth; using the same serviceable implement to cut slice after slice of ham; perpetrating terrible enormities with the butter-plate, and in all other respects, behaving less like a civilized Christian than the worst kind of ogre. Being, by this time, fully gorged, he crowned his amiable exploits with a draught from the water-pitcher. (30)

As he satisfies his wants and makes known his irrepressible embodiment, Silas acts democratically, not by participating in a privatized illusion of the public sphere but by recognizing that people's needs and desires take up space in the social hierarchy. While the rest of the company wonder how to deal with a sickly seamstress Priscilla, cast down on the community's doorstep, Silas treats her as he treats himself-as a body with organs. "Give the girl a hot cup of tea, and a thick slice of this first-rate bacon," he says, enmeshing Priscilla in, and so vitally reconnecting her to relations of production and consumption (31). Never one to dematerialize his fellows as Coverdale does, Silas attends to her physical being as a means of confirming her belonging to the community: "In a week or two, she'll begin to look like a creature of this world!" (31). Unlike the sociocelestial views of the Blithedalers and the lyceum crowd, his politics promote imbrication not disconnection. With this perspective that gives Priscilla substance, a community might begin to substantiate the specific conditions - her genealogy, economic history, labors with the needle, and genderthat have brought her to Blithedale.

Not a true democrat in the sense that his insistent corporeality cannot represent abstract virtue as does the virgin reserve of Priscilla

or Eva, Silas is rather a radical democrat. What distinguishes radical from true democracy is the configuration of freedom: a citizen such as Stowe's half-living corpse or Hawthorne's Veiled Lady rejects all earthly dross, imagining freedom as freedom from the socius, whereas a citizen such as Silas grapples with social conditions, experiencing freedom as a freedom to participate in the daily forms and activities that constitute community. "Let her stay with us . . . and help in the kitchen, and take the cow-breath at milking time," he says of Priscilla, according her the opportunity to add to their joint-stock company in substantial ways. The radical democrat acknowledges contingency, in contrast to the true democrat who constructs subjects freed from cultural influence. As he speaks of Priscilla, dependent clauses signal awareness of contingency: "Let her" perform these mild labors, Silas says, so that she will soon become a "creature of *this* world," as opposed to an occult sphere of antiproduction that veils conflict and antagonism. He does not issue an ultimatum but does make work a condition of belonging. Unlike the true democrat who adopts a transcendent perspective that abstracts a body without organs from material conditions, the radical democrat contextualizes citizenship, creating dialogue between people, production, and consumption.

Zenobia's Corpse

Her free, careless, generous modes of expression often had this effect of creating images which, though pure, are hardly felt to be quite decorous.—Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*

Although gender and class separate her from Silas, Zenobia also practices radical democracy. Both remind the community of tangible histories that Coverdale's poetic tendency and Hollingsworth's reformist consciousness would soon forget. Silas gives commonsense demonstration that all nourishment is not spiritual, and Zenobia insists that the dead need not sublimate earthly oppression by becoming departed spirits. Zenobia is emphatic about the materiality of death, counteracting the occult's central tenet. Like Silas at the supper table, she does not voice her protest so much as she renders it intelligible with

a series of unappeasable gestures. She expresses herself via rigor mortis, an unyielding posture that raises questions about the capacity to move effortlessly between sociocelestial (and sociopolitical) spheres. Her corpse neutralizes political fantasies of girlhood as a noncontingent state in which restrictive differences melt away to reveal a historyless body as the perfected citizen.

Coverdale has so fallen in love with this sort of deanimation that he makes Zenobia emblematic, nullifying the specificity that lends depth to her grievances and betrayals. "She is reduced by Coverdale to a disembodied idea-woman incarnate, the enigma of femininity," writes Elisabeth Bronfen.⁹⁰ Coverdale wants to see this woman humbled, attending to her soul's enfranchisement rather than her body's empowerment. When he and the other men of Blithedale pull her drowned corpse from the river, he quickly interprets her expression, musculature, and posture as proof that even a person committed to women's rights and sexual equality will abandon social agitation, and so at last find repose. Coverdale hopes that in death, Zenobia transcends the need to act politically, and to convince himself of her transcendence he puts into effect Emerson's famous formula in *Nature* that "particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts." ⁹¹ He looks at her corpse and does not see it; in place of her material body, he creates a spiritual symbol that outstrips her deconstruction of womanhood. Like the mesmerized subjects of Poe and Poyen, he sees beyond her organs to uncover the lifeless bliss of biological as well as political stasis. In life, Zenobia protests women's circumscribed roles, but as the half-living corpse of Coverdale's imagination, she counsels the living about the wisdom of complacence and submission:

Her arms had grown rigid in the act of struggling, and were bent before her, with clenched hands; her knees, too, were bent, and—thank God for it!—in the attitude of prayer. Ah, that rigidity! It is impossible to bear the terror of it. . . . She knelt, as if in prayer. With the last, choking consciousness, her soul, bubbling out through her lips, it may be, had given itself up to the Father, reconciled and penitent. (235)

No longer "struggling" against the social current, she submits to an ultimate patriarchal power. The poet's necrophilia calms her: Coverdale's words make Zenobia politically somnolent and reveal him to be as much a mesmerist as Poyen or Westervelt. Thrown into a trance

and released from "nervous" meditations on gender inequality, Zenobia reaffirms earthly hierarchy as a higher truth. In Coverdale's mind, this feminist knows her place.

Mesmerized by Coverdale's description, Zenobia's body-as-spirit finds peace. His narrative represses the discontent that gave her conversation and actions an unremitting critical edge. Yet the repressed returns: historical traces of her resistance to being an ideal citizen, a good girl like Priscilla, or a true democrat like Evangeline erupt from the very posture Coverdale at first represents as so allaying. Her body accepts death but not dematerialization. As Coverdale is forced to acknowledge:

But her arms! They were bent before her, as if she against Providence in never-ending hostility. Her hands! They were clenched in immitigable defiance. Away with the hideous thought! (235)

Zenobia's recalcitrant materiality overcomes Coverdale's desire for a passive female subject, for a body forgetful of its opposition to prevailing social conditions. His words frame a verbal echo of Joseph Buchanan's graphic encryption of woman's body (see figure 14). Much as this psychic researcher obsesses on an immobile woman's arms as "combative" sites of arrogance, "ambition," and "love of power," Coverdale takes a phrenological-physiological turn, targeting the arms of another immobile woman as the source of socially disruptive tendencies.⁹²

His effort to render public citizenship as a psychopolitical affect modeled on privacy and acquiescence fails, however. Zenobia's motionless, statuesque body expresses history if not accusation. The use of a hooked pole to retrieve the drowned woman wounds her breast, its disfigurement becoming a memento mori to the crass speculations about her sexuality and fortune. Zenobia is the citizen who will not suffer amnesia; her corpse chooses the ghastly over the sentimental, memory over transcendence. Her combative body becomes a gruesome memorial to a quasi socialist community that, whatever its claim to equality, insists on women's docility. Coverdale loves this corpse because his only other option is to fear it. Political necrophilia seeks to regulate unruly bodies, such as Zenobia's, that awkwardly inhabit the designation of citizen, their maladjustment to citizenship inciting panic that citizenship is an internally divided category invested

with oppositional force. Erotic desire for the dead citizen results from a horror of socially alive and politically animated actors who engage with the public sphere in particularistic and materially untranscendent ways. Necrophilia is an incomplete turn away from a phobia of democratic contention and unpredictability; the dead citizen remains haunted by the politically living actor. This fault line marks the perpetually unsettled ground of radical democracy.

Contemptuous of docility and disembodiment, Zenobia mutely argues for the citizen's materiality in a context where citizenship is idealized as passive mediumship. Her rebellious corpse echoes suspicions that unsublimated desires and particularities linger in the trances of little girls, even in the Veiled Lady's somnambulism. Surely adolescent seers have access to what spiritualists described as the "gorgeous beauties of death," but heavenly visions also remained mired in "matters not altogether spiritual," as the author of Necromancy; or, A Rap for the Rappers alleged in 1857.93 The darkened séances in which men and women held hands as necks and knees were caressed by ghostly fingers exuded sexuality. The deathly repose of teenage clairvoyants invited an occulted eroticism. This persistent sexuality at the core of spiritualism prompted D. H. Lawrence's captious estimation of Priscilla as a "little psychic prostitute." 94 With much more anxiety than the author of Lady Chatterley's Lover, skeptics earlier protested that within mediumship, women's and girl's bodies were indelicately controlled and shamelessly exploited. As clergy and scientists voiced such concerns, they implicitly expressed frightened recognition that male identity in the public sphere was not liberated from political desire.

True democracy, it was feared, might not transcend every circumstance—least of all, specific intimate histories that preceded the public lives of girls modeling citizenship. The tawdry materialism of Hawthorne's lyceum as well as the exhibition halls rented for psychospiritual demonstrations offer visible reminders that the public sphere is linked to diseased private lives. Just as *Blithedale* exposes Priscilla's kinship with a drunkard, *The Death-Blow to Spiritualism* (1888) charges that the Fox sisters were congenitally fated to suffer moral degradation and physical exploitation because of their father's alcoholism. The implication runs that the girls' inability to enjoy wholly abstract, public selves stems from the hereditary taint of a parent "addicted to intemperate habits." And much as Coverdale blames Zenobia for Priscilla's

public prostitution, debunkers of spirit rapping repeatedly pointed the finger at Kate and Margaret's older sister, Leah, for abandoning the girls to a spectacle that sacrificed their innocence. Manipulated by Leah's eye for gain, the young mediums were trotted out for several shows a day to the point where "the 'shekels' were then pouring in in [*sic*] great abundance at the séances."⁹⁵ In this anti-Semitic slur against profiteering, *The Death-Blow to Spiritualism* unmasks the occult as a material reality in which fictions of antiproduction block awareness of actual exploitation. The spiritual image of a public sphere rests on private and socially veiled forms of oppression.

Unable to escape the specifics of family history, Priscilla, Margaret, and Kate—as a feminine composite for the male citizen—are dragged into the inherently debased commerce of spectacle. Years of public exposure enervate the girls so that by the time the Fox sisters reached adulthood, they had come to follow in their father's and sister's footsteps as alcoholics and frauds. A decrepit materiality returned to girls who once emulated the absolute purity and sublime disconnection of death. In 1875, a former medium claimed that spiritualist trances had adverse side effects, causing "defective physical organization." 96 "Miss Kate Fox," he further disclosed, had degenerated into an "invalid" after her teenage wonder years; conducting séances to summon disembodied souls exacted a toll on her body, "exhaust[ing] the nervous energies" of the medium.97 Ruined constitutions confirmed what many first had suspected since the outbreak of U.S. mesmerism in the 1830s—namely, that etherealized female subjects were vulnerable to carnal impulses, that spiritual liberty is not altogether free of physical license. As the anonymous author of The Confessions of a Magnetiser (1845) charged, the electrical communion between mesmerist and medium cloaks "vile and sensual purposes." 98 Occult practices invited what another sensational expose of mesmerism called "unwarrantable liberties." 99 Priscilla's spiritual freedom was indeed at risk: two years after the publication of Blithedale, she once again appeared as a medium, this time more scandalously in Orestes Augustus Brownson's The Spirit-Rapper (1854), to preside over a passionate mingling of radicals-abolitionists, women's rights advocates, mesmerists, and spiritualists—all bent on liberating the body's sexual energy. In Brownson's hands, Priscilla's erotic innocence loses its maiden reserve and liberty becomes license. After a series of magnetic encoun-

ters, her "flesh cries out for . . . liberty! sweet liberty! how I love thee. My heart and soul pant for thee."¹⁰⁰ With an influx of ungovernable physicality and unscrupulous materialism, freedom no longer secures virginal independence from social stimuli. Just as the connection of Priscilla's spirituality to Zenobia's unruly materiality reminds Blithedale's residents that their community is founded on trespass and distrust, the medium's thinly veiled sexuality implies that spiritual citizenship never escapes earthly historical conditions.

"Unwarrantable liberties" arise when Silas joins Hollingsworth and Coverdale's all-male ideological assault on a dead woman's corpse. The laborer notices Zenobia's unseemly position, and endeavors to sentimentalize her defiant stance by forcing her arms to hang complacently at her side. His efforts meet with no success, however, and Coverdale, always one to help out in a communal crisis, upbraids the impromptu undertaker, "In God's name, Silas Foster . . . let that dead woman alone" (236). It no doubt seems odd that this yeoman farmer (who I earlier distinguished as a radical democrat in contrast to Stowe's dying child as a true democrat) essays to erase the historicity of Zenobia's final gesture. Being a radical democrat does not mean that he will be a perfect citizen but it does mean that he will touch, interact, and struggle with his compatriots. Silas vies with Zenobia's corpse over issues of feminine propriety and his actions reject Coverdale's notion that contexts of labor should not touch women's bodies. Lower-class hands may produce stimuli and sensations that will sexualize, not spiritualize, the social corpse of the citizen. Necrophilia is only for those liberals who, like Coverdale, privilege privacy above all else. Political motive is, of course, bound up with Coverdale's respect for the dead: nonintercourse with her corpse ensures that her unbecoming resistance will make no tangible impression on any member of utopia.101

Coverdale's outrage is surprising, given his predilection for young girls caught in the deathlike trance of mesmerism and his participation in a full-blown cultural necrophilia hostile to embodied historical citizenship. But Zenobia is not a proper necrophilic subject. In contrast to departed spirits who convey messages of serene social organization, this dead woman does not glory in an occult public sphere without strife. In contrast to the medium as half-living corpse who closes herself off to external stimuli, Zenobia remains entrenched in

the struggles of this world. Her dead body bears the eloquent memory of discord in a community that was supposed to have none. Efforts to make her body appear decent only exacerbate her contentiousness since she so earnestly critiqued notions of decency and other gender expectations in the first place. Coverdale attempts to smooth over this ongoing conflict by encouraging amnesia, by banishing "the hideous thought" of a body animated by social opposition. His respect for Zenobia's privacy originates in a desire to privatize the political actor. His narrative eulogizes her domesticated identity—despite the fact that throughout the novel, she is only known by the "magazinesignature" of her public persona (13):

Being the woman that she was, could Zenobia have foreseen all these ugly circumstances of death, how ill it would become her, the altogether unseemly aspect which she must put on, and, especially, old Silas Foster's efforts to improve the matter, she would no more have committed the dreadful act, than have exhibited herself to a public assembly in a badly-fitting garment! (236)

Perhaps in this fantasy of embarrassment, Zenobia will be so mortified as to return home to the grave's intimate seclusion. This collapse of public and private spheres trivializes her death as a fashion mistake even as it equates public appearance to a type of death. What the citizen desires in the public sphere, as Coverdale's utopian liberalism would have it, is no different from what the citizen desires when alone. But as the inherent stains on the Fox sisters' innocence and Priscilla's repressed private history show, when at one's most intimate, the citizen is left alone with a self whose instability makes him or her vulnerable to public exploitation and alienation.

To die a proper death is to live as a public body without organs. Rigid and immobile, the corpse cherishes alienation. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, bodies without organs, bodies without the sensibility to experience culture, are "catatonic bodies [that] have fallen into the river like lead weights, immense transfixed hippopotamuses who will not come back up to the surface."¹⁰² So too, in her suicide by drowning, Zenobia has fallen into the river, but she resurfaces and is borne back to the community. Using a makeshift bier, the men struggle "slowly, slowly, with many a dreary pause" to carry her waterlogged corpse (237). In her afterlife, Zenobia demands that the rep-

resentatives of utopia perform labor, that its necrophilic imagination experience her identity as a material condition.

Perhaps Poe best appreciated women's death as an occasion of male cathexis in his 1846 remark that "the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably the most *poetical* topic in the world."¹⁰³ Poe is only about half right, however. The image of a dead woman is one of the most *political* topics in a U.S. world of protopsychological discourses. But it is a politics that ultimately disengages the sociohistorical world in a movement patterned after the somnambulist's trance. As both spectacle and specter, public womanhood deadens citizenship. The half-living corpse that offers a site of political (mis)recognition, first and foremost provides erotic material for liberal male imaginations such as Coverdale's. Against a commonsense view of nineteenthcentury whites in the United States as caught up in intense democratic debate and vibrant social reforms, the occult suggests a history haunted by inactivity and a rigid commitment to the political status quo. We might think of this history as a cultural history of eroticism that explains the citizen's desire to privatize public life as the normative longing of deathly citizenship.

Epitaph

It is difficult to learn anything from the dead woman's corpse without also occupying Coverdale's position of intellectual voyeur. One way to avoid this position is to read against a necro ideology that reduces referentiality and to instead interpret the dead as making an active commentary on life in the U.S. public sphere. The dead speak: the question is whether the living will hear a story about the ways in which belonging, incorporation, and other processes of democratic community produce social corpses. The dead tell an alternative tale of the citizen-subject as haunted, as an internally divided category unable to resolve an ambivalence between abstraction and political engagement, generic being and specific embodiment, and tranquil consensus and spirited conflict.

In its golden moments when rationality and abstraction reigned supreme, the public sphere seemed flush with emancipatory potential. "The clichés of 'equality' and 'liberty,' not yet ossified into revolu-

tionary bourgeois propaganda formulae, were still imbued with life," writes Habermas of this storied time.¹⁰⁴ Zenobia's living corpse argues, however, that as equality and liberty appear in public, they are already imbued with death because exclusion and forgotten privilege precede—and enable—the human actor's entrance into the public sphere and underwrite his or her freedom. In this context, the citizen's confession is not that he or she was in love with radical democracy but rather is that the citizen—was in love—with—Priscilla and the depoliticized specter of democracy.



The "Black Arts" of Citizenship

AFRICANIST ORIGINS OF WHITE

INTERIORITY

In what had become the normal behavior of paranormal activity, spirits rang bells and the dead reestablished contact with the living at an 1854 séance convened by the Fox sisters in New York City. Also familiar was the presence of radical abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, who calmly sat "waiting for some demonstrations from the invisible world." He was not disappointed: "We had our right foot patted as by a human hand, and the right leg of our pantaloons strongly pulled, by some unseen agency," wrote the voice of the Liberator.¹ Marking the disjunction between Garrison's singular physical body touched by occult powers and his use of an editorial "we," a logic of abstraction and disembodiment oversees both spiritualism and antislavery reform. Since the start of the Rochester Knockings, Garrison had kept abreast of the occult, reading as much spiritualist literature as he could get his hands on and participating in séances. His encounters with ghostly subjects emancipated from the bondage of finite existence serve as a flashpoint in the depoliticizing overlap between abolition and the occult, between liberal concern for black bodies and popular interest in white souls. The occult plays a constitutive role in constructing the black body in ways that legitimate white disembodiment as a civic virtue.

Even though sexual myths, commodification, pseudoscience, and

legal definitions burdened blackness with an irredeemable materiality, citizens strangely had trouble distinguishing free white spirits from slave bodies. African American writers hinted at how the specific historicity of black embodiment disappeared under white spirituality. A tipsy reveler in Frank Webb's The Garies and Their Friends (1857) approaches a shadowed presence and asks, "Spirit of – hic – hic – night, whence co-co-comest thou? . . . [S]p-p-peak—art thou a creature of the mag-mag-na-tion-goblin-damned, or only a nigger?—[S]peak!"² While this confusion might be chalked up to drink, it also stems from Webb's revision of Cassy's famous stratagem in Uncle Tom's Cabin that induces an intoxicated Simon Legree to mistake a quadroon woman for his mother's ghost. The misapprehension in The Garies pivots on the fact that the specter is in actuality a white man who has been forced to wear blackface. Whites, not blacks, have an interest in misrecognizing African Americans as ghosts, as barely historical presences. In another early African American novel, James Howard's Bond and Free (1886), a plantation owner misunderstands the report that a slave is "safe on de other side" as tidings of her death rather than news of her successful passage to the free states. Although he attributes his mistake to the "way that the negroes had of speaking of the dead," the planter's mystification readily abides by a contractual logic that underwrites white disembodiment with black materiality.³

Inquiry into the racial origins of parapsychological discourses leads back to black bodies, which in an echo of Stowe's Cassy, supply a burdened white unconscious with spiritual knowledge. Under still more layers, however, this genealogy is aptly modified along the lines of Webb's encounter with a racially cross-dressed "spirit of — hic — hic night" to disclose the black bodies beneath the white soul as fictions of an ahistorical social vision. In contrast to specters of white disingenuousness, the occult appears in African American writing, especially the slave narrative, as a means of historicizing social hierarchies that seem eternal and beyond human history. For many slaves and slave narrators, the spiritual is not the parapsychological sphere that it is for white liberals but a quasi-religious experience of diasporic character beyond a master's purview. Calling this emphasis on the soul that does not outstrip the body "Blackwater," Manning Marable describes the "radical consciousness" of African American spiritual beliefs that offset a quiescent worldview implicit in many strains of Christianity in

the United States.⁴ Yet the complex racial dynamics latent in mesmerism and spiritualism also compromised the critical impetus of slave narratives: the radical consciousness of African American spiritual beliefs was frequently rendered as an effect of white unconsciousness in an occult public sphere that fetishized and disarmed the activist bent of Blackwater.

Bond and Free marks this ambivalence. A slave named Elva explains, "Massa Johnnie, she's not dead, but free, free!" to disabuse the planter of his belief that passage to "de other side" is a Thanatopic release from sociopolitical striving. But a few pages later when Elva dies, the message is, "Massa Johnnie, Elva's-free-free at last." ⁵ At one moment a reclaiming of alienated corporeality and, at the next, an extinguishing of embodiment, being "free, free" both exceeds and depends on necrophilic citizenship. Howard's novel reflects the uncertain status of freedom amid material conditions and immaterial outcomes. Spiritual disembodiment often is the only freedom under both the plantation's disciplinary regimen and the more pervasive stigmatization of corporeality, what Robyn Wiegman terms "the visible, epidermal iconography of difference."⁶ But noncorporeal freedom lacks the substantive force to make a difference in the constitution of historical reality. This chapter contends that African American texts, in particular Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, finesse this divide between spiritual liberation and corporeal freedom. Along the way, it will be helpful to look at other "incidents" - mesmerism's connection to plantation slavery in the Caribbean, Frederick Douglass's attendance at a public séance, the use of early versions of Ouija boards to coax literally and socially dead slaves to appear, and Abraham Lincoln's rumored interest in spiritualism at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation — that suggest the political scope of a sociocelestial discourse on race and freedom.

What about the Materiality of the Body?

Corporeal underpinnings of spiritual liberation appear in resonant metaphors from Douglass's 1845 slave narrative that yoke literacy to the damaged body: for example, "My feet have been so cracked with the frost, that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the

gashes." The free narrator does not efface the slave body; his frostbitten feet present a palpable memory. The pen soothes the body's unquiet history, its graphic materiality a register of the speaker's connection to and distance from slavery's privations. At another point, with his fingers locked around a white man's throat, he relies on embodiment to reanimate his identity as a socially dead slave. Scripting a brawl as neo-Christian allegory, Douglass forges a defiant spirit out of what he depicts as the raw masculine material of his body:

I seized Covey hard by the throat; and as I did so, I rose. He held on to me, and I to him. . . . The battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point of my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood.⁷

Douglass later described the reciprocal grasp between slave and slavemaster as an epiphany when the two "stood as equals before the law." 8 The Narrative, however, also exemplifies an inegalitarian paradox common to slave autobiographies that, as Lindon Barrett explains, links the literate slave's prioritization of mind over body to an injunction that African Americans foreground black embodiment in order to be taken as credible narrators.9 Squeezing Covey's windpipe and obstructing his speech, Douglass intuits the connection between physical body and linguistic self-construction. Episodes of literate as well as literal violence, the scenes of pen and throat suggest Douglass's awareness that the "natural" body emerges from social antagonism and the tactile use of power. In a cunning riff on Habermas, Paul Gilroy labels Douglass's choking of Covey as "an ideal speech situation" that communicates in no uncertain terms the desperate violence that is part of modernity.¹⁰ For Gilroy, the fight with Covey presents not simply a physical struggle but also a metaphysical attempt to texture rationality with freedom.

In deploying his constructed body to stoke the "embers of freedom," Douglass anticipates contemporary interventions in corporeality, discourse, and subjectivity, among which Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* stands as the most important. Without ignoring the differences in their historical situations and social power, I compare this latetwentieth-century theorist and nineteenth-century ex-slave activist because the parallel can help to defamiliarize assumptions about disembodiment and abstraction that attend formal citizenship. With an

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analytic goal that recalls Douglass's liberatory practice, Butler meditates on "the rearticulation of democratic contestation" by stressing the undeniable body.¹¹ For Butler, the body's materiality is never prior to normative regulation but is instead produced at and as a site of power. At the outset of Bodies That Matter, she asks, "If I persisted in this notion that bodies were in some way constructed, perhaps I really thought words alone had the power to craft bodies from their linguistic substance?"¹² Free and democratic subjects do not naturally occur as though they were the result of some pure or organic political process: Butler and Douglass each recognize the complex role of the body's constructed naturalness in delimiting the articulation of social identities. From the point of inception (or more precisely, conception), the body remains shot through with disciplinary norms. The so-called natural body is overlayered, its constitution dependent on regulatory discourses that assign sex, gender, and race as unquestioned essences. Though the body remains material, "materiality" itself needs to be "rethought as the effect of power, as power's most productive effect." ¹³ Douglass, his body produced and valued by the slave power in more ways than one, could hardly object to this analysis about the constitutive role of power in engendering the subjectivity housed by the allegedly natural body.

Both Butler and Douglass evaluate materiality with critical ambivalence, as a source of possible emancipation and a locus of certain regulation. For Douglass, the body birthed as property under a paternalistic regime matures and violently asserts equality. For Butler, the body interpellated into the "domain of language and kinship" also has a capacity to become the subject of rearticulations that contest foundational restrictions.¹⁴ Although Douglass and Butler privilege the power of discourse in their respective analyses of subject formation, each is careful to attend to the body, especially as the target of vastly different regulatory technologies from slave to gender codes. Their shared focus on the forced production of the body is useful in desublimating citizenship, particularly its central mythology that "citizen" is a "freely" chosen identity, the result of contractual consent.

In coming to this line of interrogation, Butler credits auditors who responded to her deconstruction of the natural body by asking, "What about the materiality of the body, *Judy*?" She concedes that this challenge, despite its infantilizing tone, offers a sort of primal scene for

an investigation into "the normative conditions under which the materiality of the body is framed and formed."¹⁵ Butler works against notions of subjectivity as a fundamentally disembodied and noncontingent proposition. Her examination contributes to a democratic contestation by making the very grounds of identity susceptible to political critique. As significant as attention to the body's materiality is to comprehending the regulatory force of normativity, it muddles understandings of cultural hierarchies so that power appears to work its effects solely at the level where discourse becomes material. Not addressed by this question are regulatory norms where discourse concerns immateriality—specifically, the spiritual and psychological constraints that interpellate subjects with souls.

The power of immaterial conditions can be imagined with a slight rephrasing of the question put to Butler: "What about the materiality of the body, Linda?" Here, Linda is Linda Brent, the pseudonymous heroine of Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861). The body's materiality is much more difficult for Jacobs to negotiate. Where Butler suspects that questions about materiality seek to reconstitute her "as an unruly child, one who needed to be brought to task, restored to . . . bodily being," Jacobs apprehends that any speculation about her body uncannily replays sentimental, scopic, and racist economies that fetishize and commodify black women.¹⁶ Materiality returns Linda to overdetermined senses of embodiment-including the sexually harassed body of the "slave girl" and the debilitated body of the fugitive-that she cannot shake in her experiences with Northern abolitionism and domestic service. In contrast to Butler's consideration of materiality that moves away from the body toward a reexamination of her argument's epistemological assumptions, Jacobs's considerations never escape the body-or the soul that it is presumed to degrade. As Jacobs reluctantly explores the body's materiality in a culture that castigated blacks and women precisely in terms of their embodiment, she returns to the soul as a site immune to paternalistic (de)valuation. Escape is short-lived, however, as she realizes that the spiritual itself constitutes a terrain colonized by white religious imperatives.

The substitution of "Linda" for "Judy" reveals the privilege involved in thinking about the body. Theorizing materiality affords Butler the opportunity to become disembodied at the textual site of public rep-

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resentation. For Jacobs, though, a focus on materiality reproduces her sexualization in the minds of Northern readers since, as her narrative silences make all too clear, to speak of the body is to overdetermine it.¹⁷ The point is not that Linda has no such privilege to underrepresent the body; neither is it that she has no access to metaphysical discourse as a way to veil her all-too-public sexual history. Even as Linda flees materiality, especially conditions that commodify sexuality, she experiences regulations of the spirit in ways that Butler's argument cannot acknowledge. Linda refuses to see the soul as an alternative to the culturally bound and determined body. To exist as a soul is to reap the rewards of generic personhood, but it is also to incur prohibitions that authorize the unequal distribution of disembodiment, social transparency, and other resources associated with the public sphere. *Incidents* fuses materiality and spirituality to lay bare the repressive effects of having a soul.

In her flight from unfree and moralistic constructions of sexuality, Linda turns from the body's materiality to the soul's immortality. She chats with her dead father, sees her children as ghosts, and longs for death as a final freedom, yet instead of overcoming the institutional conditions that circumscribe her mortal being, each of these spiritual encounters intensifies slavery's despair as social death. The final chapter, "Free at Last," invokes an African American spiritual to guide readers to a heavenly sphere beyond the compromised freedom of Linda's service to the white woman who has purchased her. The text concludes with two complementary-though also mutually destabilizing—images of spiritual liberation immune to earthly trammeling. Linda conjures up "tender memories of my good old grandmother, like light, fleecy clouds floating over a dark and troubled sea," in the autobiography's last sentence.¹⁸ The dead comfort the living in a world where the past supplies only a sadistic institutional history. Linda resorts to necro ideology as much as Coverdale does, hoping that eternal images can calm agitated memories. Against Linda's "gloomy recollections" of the past, the dead display a postpolitical personhood whose struggles have been laid to rest (201).

Against reveries of her deceased grandmother, however, comes a letter communicating the death of her uncle, Phillip. Instead of imagining the sweet morbidity of death as a soothing release from black embodiment, this obituary stirs up sharp contradictions that deflate

necrophilic fantasies of citizenship. Her uncle's eulogist reports that Phillip attains posthumous enfranchisement in the columns of the town newspaper:

Now that death had laid him low, they call him a good man and a useful citizen; but what are eulogies to the black man, when the world has faded from his vision? It does not require man's praise to obtain rest in God's kingdom. (201)

This honorific notice ironically incorporates "the black man" only when he lacks a material body to put citizenship to use. Linda distances herself from the state-authorized transubstantiation of black man into dead citizen: "Strange they called a colored man a *citizen*! Strange words to be uttered in that region!" (201). What is "strange" is that a community that so consistently devalued black lives would treasure reflections about a black man's death.¹⁹ Here lies a necrophilia that rivals the peace Linda finds in her deceased grandmother: spiritual citizenship overshadows her uncle's body, his industrious efforts to work toward his own and his family members' freedom forfeited to the town's official memory. Her reflection signals the rupture created when a racial body awkwardly occupies the abstract designation of citizen. What remains unclear, though, is the precise locality of "that region." Contextually, "that region" denotes the South, but syntactically, it also refers to the logical antecedent of "God's kingdom" mentioned by her uncle's eulogist. This ambiguity provokes Linda's sarcastic recognition that a postpolitical landscape-idealized as an egalitarian realm where racial difference pales in light of the heavenly category of moral sameness - produces all-too-familiar models of domination. Ghosts regulate earthbound subjects even though a morbid sentimentality instructs her that hierarchies do not apply in death. As an occult public sphere manages both citizens and noncitizens, African American memories, such as Linda's about her grandmother and uncle, are enjoined to transcend specific historical contexts to the point where they are no longer specific or historical.

An alternative politics does not inhere in the region of the soul. Instead, the spiritual represents an intensification of the same politics, of a regime that uses black embodiment to effect its own privileged opacity. Before addressing the effects of the occult on Jacobs and the story Linda tells, it is necessary first to gauge how egalitarian prom-

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ises are infused with specters of domination. Ghostly hierarchies surround the slave narrative, converting incidents about black bodies into stories of white unconsciousness. Pathways for this migration were laid decades before Jacobs's narrative, far back in the subvention of West African religious practices under New World psychology.

Black Origins of the White Unconscious

The spiritualization of politics in the United States originates in displaced African bodies. Occult investigations of the unconscious, mesmerism, clairvoyance, and séances all sought to liberate knowledge from bodily confines by making contradictory use of the bodies and souls of people sentenced to corporeal bondage. Hailed as a gateway to higher truth, this assortment of paranormal techniques readily tallied with the postpolitical precepts of liberal reform. Abolitionism, mesmerism, and spiritualism converged in an insistence that entities held as objects and property—such as tipping tables and chattels personal-were invested with personhood. Consonant with the antiinstitutional bent of antislavery activism, believers who turned to a world of disembodied souls also turned away from systemic critique. As R. Laurence Moore observes, "Garrison found in the spiritualist camp a host of men and women who shared his aversion to the use of laws, institutions, and force as instruments to make people better."²⁰ In addition to Garrison, Lydia Maria Child, the white Grimké sisters, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Isaac and Amy Post were among the antislavery faithful who contacted the other side to reveal the truth of emancipatory agendas. Nathaniel Rogers, the antislavery editor of the Herald of Freedom, best expressed this postpolitical orientation in death when his departed spirit contacted the Liberator to spell out an antiactivist ethic of combating the peculiar institution. His spirit confirmed the desirability of personalizing the slavery crisis around the individual soul of the white slave master much as somatic critiques fetishized the closeted sexuality of white men (see chapter 2). Unlike Douglass who identified his grasp on Covey's throat as key to an awakening freedom, Rogers de-emphasized the body, and counseled abolitionists to follow a course of self-censorship and not "to force the master-even by words." The abolitionist should assume a

posture of self-effacing and self-disciplining meekness and "relax his grasp upon the [master's] throat, by clutching his own throat." First came self-restraint and then maybe political action. Any action, in Roger's postmortem counsel, would address "the cause of the slave, through universal progress," in effect transcending racial particularity and cultural difference.²¹ Although such messages from the departed relied on the "black arts," they rarely led to any reflections about the material conditions of blackness that underwrote white spirituality.

From Hawthorne's Veiled Lady to W. E. B. Du Bois's prophetic invocation more than fifty years later of the Negro as "a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world," stretches a mystical trajectory linking the paranormal to thoughts on African American destiny.²² In popular discourses of the white unconscious, elements of African mysticism retained by diasporic black populations surfaced in antipolitical forms. Mediumship and spirit possession had long existed in African cultures transported to the Caribbean and southern regions of the United States. Wrapped up in communication with the dead, as Joseph Roach argues, are questions about the relation of the present to the past, specifically a "cultural politics of memory" that both incorporates and represses New World racial encounters.²³ These politics range from intimations of vodoun in New Orleans Catholic funeral rites to echoes of "black" voice in Elvis Presley's singing, all of which Roach identifies as part of a circum-Atlantic performance of African diasporic and Native American genocidal histories. Abolitionism also staged a deeply conflicted circum-Atlantic performance that triangulated a newly discovered white unconscious amid enslaved black bodies and African necromantic traditions of clairvoyance and second sight. While the role of traditional Christian churches in antislavery activism was plain enough, conservative cultural authorities feared that nonwhite syncretism lay behind utopian declarations about the radical equality of all human souls. What concerned many onlookers of abolition's collision with mesmerism and spiritualism was that "black arts" were animating expressions of liberal sympathy.

Africanist sources of white parapsychology were not unknown in the nineteenth century and, indeed, this knowledge fueled attacks on spirit rapping as heathenish. As Parsons Cooke sardonically reasoned in *Necromancy; or, A Rap for the Rappers* (1857):

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If this so-called spiritualism is so much in advance of our previous sources of knowledge, then is Africa so much in advance as she has a fuller use of this best of all sources. . . . [I]f we must take our revelations from necromancers, we insist on employing those who are expert in the art. We insist on going to the highest sources, namely the heathen negroes of Africa. If we must throw away our Bibles, and in the stead of them adopt responses from the dead, then we must confess heathenism better than Christianity, and now throw aside all our Christian civilization and prefer the savage state of African negroes to our own civilization. If one half that is pretended by the rappers is true, this is an unavoidable inference from it.²⁴

None too calmly, Cooke discerns that faddish technologies to communicate with other planes of consciousness-a means of experiencing "transcendence," as idealists around Boston might have put ithave a long history of cultural expropriation and predation. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who would later command a black regiment in the Civil War, said of spiritualism in 1859 that "the world is taken captive by a religion unknown to Socrates," expressing the suspicion that the "American mind" has non-Western origins.²⁵ And as contraband later streamed into Union army camps, Northerners recognized spiritualistic leanings in the superstitions of slaves. A soldier from a Wisconsin regiment who, doing picket duty, came across escaping slaves stated that the "negro character is one of great interest to me, and should be to every Spiritualist. . . . The Negro is mediumistic." ²⁶ This attraction to slave superstition intimates how somnambulism, spirit rapping, trance speaking, and other performances of white interiority depended on black "contributions" to psychosocial discourse.

Though *Necromancy* reads as a bold exposé about "a dethronement of reason" imperiling Western evangelical traditions, early investigators of the unconscious in the Americas never sought to hide, and in fact pursued, the links between white middle-class psyches and black bodies held captive to regimes of forced labor.²⁷ Charles Poyen, the erstwhile French language teacher mentioned earlier who reintroduced mesmerism to New England in the 1830s, affirmed that a visit to his parents' sugar plantation in the West Indies presented ample opportunity to observe trances among slaves. Reflecting on his fourteenmonth sojourn in Guadaloupe and Martinique, he credited "rich and

intelligent planters" for introducing him to animal magnetism, and yet his evident satisfaction in "witnessing several cases of somnambulism, produced by my friends on some of their colored servants," invites speculation about the role of vodoun in creating the effects of spirit possession and trance.²⁸ But liberalism's reformist consciousness repressed these syncretic debts to African populations in the New World. In the migration of Africanist religious practices to white psychology, reform becomes confined to consciousness as purely a question of inward spiritual awareness; the privilege of disembodiment derives, in part, from slaves whose encumbered bodies silently seemed to justify the universalism of animal magnetizers, spiritualists, and antislavery men and women.

Pauline Hopkins's Of One Blood (1902-1903) imaginatively preserves one such circum-Atlantic performance given at an antebellum soiree where a plantation owner throws a slave woman into a somnambulic trance. Having "made some valuable discoveries along the line of mesmeric phenomena," the master shows off his control of the servant's conscious and unconscious life. The spiritual bondage of New England maidens that Hawthorne and others feared as the dark result of animal magnetism is applied on the plantation with an ironic literalness to make a psychological slave out of a slave. But on this occasion, the spectacle backfires. The slave woman-as-clairvoyant prophesizes in the mode of Nat Turner, foreseeing "a trail of blood" that will ravage the South.²⁹ Her revelations ventriloquize the deepest fears of the slaveholding class. Technology designed to manipulate black unconsciousness works to the opposite effect—in this instance, exposing the obsessive guilt and compulsive anxiety that wrack white psychology. In its ability to make the subject quiescent, mesmerism no doubt appealed to Poyen's creole hosts in Guadaloupe and Martinique as a humanitarian innovation in slave management, though as Joan Dayan contends the ability of those possessed by human masters to claim a deeper spirit possession made vodoun in the minds of the enslaved much more than a parlor game to entertain guests from the metropole.30

Poyen returned from the Caribbean with an understanding of animal magnetism not as an enlightened disciplinary technology but as a psychological justification for abolition. Signs of possession in "colored servants" leads him "to form the opinion that the human

soul was gifted with the same primitive and essential faculties, under every clime, among every nation, and under whatever skin, black, red, or white, it may be concealed." The unconscious—or at least Poyen's map of it—eradicates difference by discovering a hidden realm of egalitarian spiritual relations. Against the material backdrop of "a comfortable existence" that he dutifully attributes to the labor of his parents' "many slaves," Poyen idealizes the nonsocial world of the spirit.³¹ By declaring irrelevant all the particulars that bear on bodies weather, political systems, the cultural meanings of skin color—so as to pursue essence, he formulates an emancipatory agenda. With the help of animal magnetism, Poyen sheds light on the eternal commonalities that argue for the soul's utopian capacity to liberate the body.

Mesmerism's revelation of universal truths spurred Poyen's return to the United States not as a French teacher but as an antislavery pamphleteer. Abolitionism, however, did not prove profitable, and so Poyen took up animal magnetism, restoring the health of neurasthenic young women through hypnosis. Yet antislavery activism and paranormal activity were not mutually exclusive. For many would-be emancipators, mesmerism and spiritualism addressed the origins of inequality in contrast to abolitionism, which treated only its symptoms. At a time when the liberation of "mankind" took precedence over black emancipation, disembodied freedom came before social and political equality. As one reformer declared after attending a séance led by teenage mediums at the Rutland Free Convention, "The slavery of the soul is worse than that of the body." 32 His statement aptly reveals how liberatory as well as liberal agendas inscribe hierarchy: here, the soul is elevated at the body's expense in ways that ignore the onerous physicality of slave labor. In order for the soul to trump the body, and more specifically, in order for white psychology to take precedence over black servitude, a fragile U.S. consciousness has to be invented. This discovery of interiority comes not in an arena of rational exchange, as in accounts of the public sphere, but in a zone of force and exploitation-precisely the contours of the Caribbean landscape that Poyen visited.

What he saw at his parents' West Indian plantation—not simply evidence that slaves had souls but also the tortuous practices of Caribbean sugar production—caused him to strive for freedom by prioritizing mesmerism over abolitionist activity. Before piecing together

Animal Magnetism in New England, this French expatriate published "Slavery and Abolitionism" (1839), an extract from a longer treatise on forced African labor.³³ While this essay would seem more historically specific than his protopsychological research, Poyen's treatment of emancipation privileges disordered white minds over enslaved black bodies. His essay diagnoses slavery as a crisis of cultural nervousness and excitability, in fine, as a psychosocial reflection of the mental agitation that animal magnetism would calm. Despite brutal conditions of servitude that Poyen no doubt saw in the French colonial possessions he visited, slavery here figures as a noncorporeal distress, an imbalance within New England minds. Rather than emancipating blacks, abolitionists enslave white citizens by exerting a popular influence that, as Poyen describes it, uncannily echoes the relation between master/magnetizer and slave/somnambulist to "enlist the passions of their followers, exact implicit obedience from them, and rule them with the utmost intolerance and authority." 34

After this psychosocial portrait of slavery, Poyen's argument takes a not altogether uncommon turn for liberals with antislavery leanings: slavery is criminal not because of its effects on Africans but because it precipitates mental unrest and a loss of equilibrium among otherwise complacent citizens. With only a single passing condemnation of bondage as "evil," the thrust of "Slavery and Abolitionism" is not to denounce racial servitude but rather to critique Northern fanaticism. Abolitionism, not slavery, constitutes the real danger to the body politic. Overzealous devotion to black freedom unhinges the normally balanced consciousness of whites who desire to do good. Poyen cautions his readers about the excesses of radical politics:

Witness their [the abolitionists'] incessant appeals to the worst passions of the excitable, the restless, the ignorant, the deluded and reckless portions of the community . . . their incendiary attempts to excite the feelings and mould the sentiments of their followers in opposition to the authority of every kind of government, and of those sacred and social institutions by which licentiousness and depravity are restrained . . . their disgusting egotism and odious adulation of each other; their boasts of persecution and martyrdom; and their blustering claims of an onward progress—namely a progress in deluding the imaginations, exciting the passions, and collecting the money of new recruits.³⁵

The historical conditions of antislavery agitation-characterized as an irrational threat to the rational public sphere-beset white psychology. Black bodily oppression leads to white mental derangement. Despite the fact that Poyen, earlier protested in Animal Magnetism in New England that Caribbean possession (as both the influence of spirits and slaveholders' interest in property) documents the equality of blacks and whites in terms of "primitive and essential faculties," the unconscious ultimately tells a far less egalitarian story. Spirit possession dematerializes the facts of colonial possession: the connections between "the spirit work of voodoo" and "voodoo economics perpetuated by the West" that Houston Baker Jr. notes, take a backseat to the unhistorical ills of white psychology.³⁶ White interiority grounds an unequal representational slide in which the shared sensibilities experienced by "whatever skin, black, red, or white," are significant, not for beings whose "skin" suffers violation and outrage but for the minds of citizens who think too passionately about those bodies. Black bodies, in effect, perilously impact white minds.

Poyen's diagnosis of a nervous public culture parallels somatic critiques advanced by Sylvester Graham and the liberal antislavery supporters (among them Emerson) examined in chapter 2. Notwithstanding the different "medical" specialties that led Graham to discipline overexcited male bodies and Poyen to soothe overexcited minds, they united in prescribing no politics in a healthy citizen's diet. It comes as no surprise, then, that Poyen, like his contemporary Graham, favored gradual as opposed to immediate emancipation. For each, the headstrong and not to mention libidinal bent of radical abolitionism sabotaged the measured goodwill of humanitarian slaveholders who desired to work with moderate antislavery activists and solve a national problem. Graham's self-controlling citizenry meshes with Poyen's somnolent body politic, each protected by its freedom from any unhealthy fixation on slavery's real conditions.

Animal magnetism and abolition ordain harmony as an issue of interracial unconsciousness. What made mesmerism and later the ghostly chatter of spiritualism possible was the revolutionary awareness of an immaterial force—described variously as a magnetic principle, the immortal soul's electrical energy, and invisible telepathic fluid—flowing among all human beings regardless of race. Even within this unifying force, however, an exclusionary universalism was

at work as a counterforce. The revisionist argument that Nobel Prizewinning economist Amartya Sen makes about abstract equality, applies as well to the utopian currents of Poyen's nineteenth-century liberalism: "Equality in one space goes with substantial inequalities in others." 37 But whereas Sen locates the tandem of equality and inequality in different spaces, Poyen's discovery of psychospiritual commonality is also the site of brutal inequality-Caribbean sugar production. As political theorist Uday Mehta asserts, "The period of liberal history is unmistakably marked by the systemic and sustained political exclusion of various groups and 'types' of people." ³⁸ In terms of occult manifestations of nineteenth-century liberalism, Sen's and Mehta's insights suggest how black bodies enabled democracy to conduct its business in a transcendent, unhistorical, and nonpolitical mode. The soul offers a haven to citizens grappling with difficult thoughts about unfree bodies. The privileged space of psychological disconnection remains connected to a somatic rhetoric freighted with inequality. It is thus a bit imprecise to depict, as Sen does, a type of equality that "goes with" inequality, since this language does not pack a recognition of how universal equality more than accompanies but, in fact, produces exploitative relations. Yes, liberal theory "is unmistakably marked" by exclusionary practices, yet Mehta's passive sense of "marking" does not capture universalism's active hierarchizing.³⁹ The promise of a disembodied (and democratic) citizenship elaborated at the nexus of spiritualism, mesmerism, and abolitionism fed off a reality in which psychosocial discourse sustained and, moreover, actively engendered inequality.

The interiority discovered in an occult public sphere fuses liberal projects to hierarchical outcomes. As hypnosis, trance, and animal magnetism provided the foundations of spiritualist belief, the exclusionary results of the psychological and paranormal workings common to "all men" became more pronounced. The persistence of racial oppositions within spiritualism, a discourse that seeks proof of the soul's existence after corporeal particulars have turned to dust, betrays how the postpolitical world of the afterlife does not simply reflect but actively constructs hierarchies. As psychospiritual discourse grew more utopian, the more repressive became its vision of social harmony. This cynical conclusion about popular parapsychology in particular and liberal reform in general would seem controverted by the unfavor-

able reception of spiritualism among Southerners who suspected the movement of spreading antislavery propaganda. The author of *Modern American Spiritualism* (1869), for one, explained that "the dealings of Spiritualism, this democracy of its tendencies on earth, and the republicanism of its societies after death, were wholly inconsistent with the autocracy of the slave-holding power." But a closer look at this era's "unbodied souls" confuses such easy oppositions between the liberated intellects of the North and shrouded minds of Southern taskmasters.⁴⁰

The young female medium who channels Dealings with the Dead (1861-1862) links her consciousness to a dead playmate's soul as she embarks on a spiritual regression that connects her to nonwhite origins. Her transmigration reverses the direction of the Middle Passage and returns her—in spirit—to African tribes. The medium commences by rejecting all social and psychic barriers between the self and the other: "I was Cynthia for the time being, instead of who and what I am. By-and-by there came a consciousness of this blending, so deep, so clearly defined, so calm." So complete is the electrical force uniting human souls that Cynthia, who died two years previously, narrates the bulk of the text. Crude individualism gives way to an intersubjective "blending" that liquefies corporeal boundaries. Still, this impalpable consciousness of kindred souls insists on a strict, racialized chain of being. Describing the soul's evolution in terms that bear a remarkable similarity to the racialist theories of creation that had gained credence among midcentury U.S. ethnologists and anthropologists, the tandem spirit of living medium and dead girl writes:

I ascended from the pre-human, the very human.... The list is therefore as follows: the first approach to the man was, when I found myself successively animating as central life-point, the forms of Simae, Satyrii, Troglodyte, the Gibbons . . . the Orangs, Chimpanzee, Gorilla, Nschiego, Troglodyte, Kooloo, Kamba, Beabeta, Aiteromba, Hamaka, Hottentot,* Negro, Malay, Kanaka, Digger, Indian, Tartar, Chinese, Hindoos, Persians, Arabian, Greek, Turk, German, Britain, American! . . . I awoke to a consciousness of self, and man, the immortal stood revealed!⁴¹

The white subject is magnetically aligned with other races (here figured as separate and unequally evolved species) only under conditions of disembodiment. *Dealings with the Dead* projects a free-flowing un-

conscious that depends on a rigid structure of acute racial consciousness. The permeable borders of the universal lead to hard-and-fast hierarchical divisions. Spiritual ecstasy permits privileged white subjects to exist beyond the normal stasis of the body even as it restricts others to inescapable embodiment.

The asterisk after "Hottentot" in this passage directs the reader's attention to a footnote from the publisher (in this case, the medium's father) that intensifies the regulatory logic emanating from oppositions of body and spirit. The publisher's gloss on the medium's intuitive anthropology avers:

This theory *must* be true.... It is but a few years ago that a negro woman of Charleston, South Carolina, was delivered, not only of what look[ed] like a monkey—but which *was* a monkey out and out. This woman had never seen a monkey in her life, so that this was not a case of mere mothermarking, but gestation was interrupted in some respects in some way at about the nineteenth day after conception while it went on normally in other respects.... PUB.

Metempsychosis liberates the "imprisoned spirit" so that "during its long probation it ever seeks to escape its outer bounds" while bioracially pinioning souls who cannot divest themselves of corporeal substance.42 Transmigration, like the process of animal evolution to which it is paradoxically compared, always advances, progressing beyond the body and its racial history. But just as the repetition of "Troglodyte" in the medium's list implies a recursive, degraded materiality, so too the black body revisits the white spirit. Slave motherhood — an extremely vexed category in the minds of Northern liberals even remotely familiar with abolitionist arguments-serves here as negative evidence of the progression from animal to human and from human to spirit. Black "labor" finances the privileged disembodiment of white citizens. In the asymmetries of this relationship, the black body is invoked and then hierarchized by claims of universal consciousness. Foucault's wonderful dictum that "the soul is the prison of the body" thus becomes more exact: the white soul is the prison of the black body.43

Was Lincoln a Spiritualist?

EMANCIPATION AND CLAIRVOYANCE

Rumors that Abraham Lincoln attended séances where spirits directed him to issue the Emancipation Proclamation fueled democratic visions accompanied by a hierarchical reality. The other side, it seemed, impressed politicians in the here and now with the urgency of resolving the uncertain destiny of African Americans. Such rumors may have arisen in the wake of Mary Todd Lincoln's efforts to contact her dead son, Willie, through mediums at the White House. And according to mediums, the president himself proved receptive to intangible political advice from the spirit world. In Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist? Or, Curious Revelations from the Life of a Trance Medium (1891), Nettie Colburn Maynard remembers droll episodes such as the president's surprise when table-tipping spirits laid hold of a piano and caused it to traipse about the room. She records in colorful detail Lincoln's folksy invitation to a Union army major to join him in climbing on the instrument in order to make it behave. With Lincoln's "legs dangling over the side," the piano continued to dance about.44 The spirits, however, contacted Lincoln with pressing matters of national policy in mind: a disembodied Daniel Webster, speaking through Maynard, outlined plans for the Emancipation Proclamation and later proposed that the federal government help the newly emancipated by establishing the Freedmen's Bureau (see figure 15). Maynard's memory of politically charged clairvoyance lacks the precision of her account of a spiritually possessed piano. Such is the nature of mediumship that her own historical consciousness is suspended while the "long brave"-as her Indian spirit guide dubs Lincoln – makes history.

The medium credits a "Congress of spirits" with influencing the president to issue an edict of emancipation. The ghostly assembly that convenes around Lincoln to preserve the soul of the nation remains democratic enough to guide the dispossessed as well. After visiting Lincoln, this postpolitical caucus uses clairvoyant powers to help an elderly black man locate his lost money. For Maynard, the juxtaposition of these incidents constitutes a democratic parable:



"Then turning to me he said, 'I am sorry you cannot remain to witness the inauguration, as no doubt you wish.' 'Indeed we would enjoy it,'II replied, 'but the crowd will be so great we will not be able to see you, Mr. Lincoln, even if we remain.' 'You could not help it,' he answered, drawing his tall figure to its full height, and glancing at my friend in an amused way, 'I shall be the tallest man there.'"—Page 180.

15 Abraham Lincoln consults a clairvoyant. A portrait of Daniel Webster, suggestive of the disembodied statesman's use of the medium to communicate with Lincoln, presides over the scene. (Source: Nettie Colburn Maynard, *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist? Or, Curious Revelations from the Life of a Trance Medium* [Philadelphia, Pa.: Rufus C. Hartranft, 1891].)

Early in the evening my time had been passed, and my gift exercised, in the presence and for the benefit of the ruler of a great nation, while the latter part was given, in the same manner, to alleviate the misery of a poor old negro who represented one of his most humble adherents. . . . Equal to every occasion, it [clairvoyance] touches the loftiest heights with a light of truth and wisdom . . . and descends to the lowest valleys to aid and comfort the poor and humble, and carry joy to the weak and miserable.⁴⁵

Having no need to vie for earthly resources or cherish petty rivalries, the spirits exemplify the disinterestedness that underwrites the ideal of rational public personhood. Without bodies, it is no skin off their noses to distribute resources to whites and blacks, presidents and slaves alike. This otherworldly politics that ignores difference and remains "equal to every occasion" seemingly induces egalitarian race relations in this world.

But the emancipatory policy culled from clairvoyants was dedicated to remembering the dead and the patriarchal order in which they once lived. Accompanying the carpetbaggers, venture capitalists, and reformers who descended on the defeated South was at least one medium who devoted herself to promoting spiritualism. Mary Dana Shindler traveled through several former secessionist states, listening to the souls of Confederate officers whose bodies perished on the battlefield. Her mediumship was of a musical bent and she often obliged lonely spirits by singing "Dixie." In the many conversations that make up Shindler's *A Southerner among the Spirits* (1877), the medium solicits songs from spirits, especially once painfully embodied slaves, who rap out well-known plantation melodies. In the world of the departed, the mythology of what was, for some, idyllic racial apartheid suffers no decay.

The gamut of disembodied souls from Robert E. Lee to slaves who come together in *A Southerner among the Spirits* at first indicates a sociocelestial realm devoid of earthly distinctions. Antipathy to black materiality underlies this promise, however. Speaking via the "planchette," a triangular-shaped device manipulated by the medium to spell out spirit messages, the now-liberated soul of a bondsman confirmed the equalizing parameters of the afterlife:

My name is Oliver. I was a nigger. I jes wants de good ladies to sen' up a little prayer to de man what brings de niggers out'n de dark place what de people used to call Hall. We're all black here; dere aint no white people here, but dere aint no fire. Some of 'em used to be white, but we's all one color now. . . . De driber used to lash me, but now he aint no better off dan Oliver. Can't you bring him to be prayed for? He kin come if he wants to; nobody nebber axed me to come, but see the oder spirits a comin', and I come too. *Don't write so fast, Oliver; wait till I've put down what you've said.* Yes, mam; but I aint talked to nobody for a long time, an' I can't hold my still. . . . *Is your master in the spirit-world?* Yes, mam, but he aint no better off now dan Oliver. Massa was a gentleman; so call'; but he's low down now.

Though his soul falls short of higher spiritual plateaus, Oliver takes comfort in a sphere where the past has no bearing and blackness limns a moral, not an embodied, state. Illiterate in the plantation past, he now has no problem maneuvering the planchette to stop at the appropriate letters. In Oliver's terms, "I was a nigger" but now am not. Master, driver, and slave occupy the same social strata-except that this heavenly world is decidedly nonsocial. The racial signs that immure bodies in cultural disadvantage no longer signify. Although postemancipation society fails to achieve equality, the afterlife succeeds tolerably well in this endeavor because the absence of bodily markings makes equalization the only possible arrangement. Thus, when Shindler asks another spirit who takes control of the planchette, "Were you a negro?" and he responds, "No, white man, but I wasn't much better than a negro," the medium's momentary misapprehension tokens an intangible forum where race has no meaning because there are no bodies, only souls.46

While liberated spirits seem oblivious and even contemptuous of social distinctions, the living persons who joined hands in darkened rooms around séance tables had difficulty accepting a nebulous hierarchy. At one point, the "planchette began to caper a-la-Oliver" and the spirits announced,

Here we comes, Oliver and all! Oliver gits ahead sometimes. *Oh, Oliver, you oughtn't to get before the white folks! (As A. Ward would say, this was a goak.)* Missis, mam, de white folks aint no whiter dan Oliver in de spiritworld. I'm as good as any body. De one dat comes first, talks first.⁴⁷

Oliver and company jostle a white lady, a social trespass that could meet with violent retaliation—except in this instance the bumping proceeds without physical contact, rendering it an innocuous episode of regional humor. In a séance where the bodies testing social hierarchies are in fact disembodied, democratic contestation becomes a joke ("goak") that keeps would-be transgressive identities pinioned in the condescension of a racially coded vernacular. The slave's soul voices a radical sentiment in an era of Jim Crow and vigilante injustice that he is "as good as any body." But a body is precisely what his soul lacks.

Even so, the shadow of Oliver's body materializes in the spirit world to incur the weight of social regulation. As the disembodied slave speaks through the white female medium, a certain cultural density returns and deflates the transcendent intersubject created in the psychic blending of races. Stereotype and denigration circumscribe the slave's soul by saturating his expression with minstrel-like qualities. His ghostly communiqués acquire a cramped particularity in the tools and technology used to translate spirit expression. When Oliver's soul appears, the planchette performs in the eyes of the séance circle a series of "darky" antics: "Planchette now ran over the table, raising first one wheel, then the other, and 'cutting up' generally." When he then utters a final prayer for "de good lord to git me out and gib me banjo," these mystically racialized capers are repeated: "He now played a well defined dancing tune with Planchette, and then retired." 48 The return of Oliver's repressed and supposedly transcended juba-dancing body reveals the everlasting prejudices that infuse the afterlife in ways only equaled by the thick racial vernacular that disfigures his ghostly speech. As relayed by the magnetic combination of Shindler and her planchette, Oliver's regional inflection recalls the "negro" dialect employed by local color writer Artemus Ward. In the occult world where race is a social contingency of an earthly past, where chattel once forbidden to read and write now trace out letters with the planchette, the spirit liberates the body from the burden of history only to have the disembodied remnants of subjectivity reterritorialized by racially discriminatory accents. When the souls of former black bodies communicated from the other side, they were scrupulous to conform to the social constraints of the here and now. The resurfacing of injustice at the site of heavenly compensation exposes the force of the spirit in

codifying bodies freed from life as well as slavery. Under the hierarchy of a dead social order, any of the more intangible aspects of subjectivity (whether described as consciousness, soul, spirit, or inner being) that escape regulation do so only temporarily and are soon enough returned to the very real workings of power.

Universalism has rather specific effects: instead of extending equality, it equalizes social hierarchy as a matter of psychology and (un)consciousness. This capacity allowed whites to imagine themselves as equally oppressed by slavery as blacks. Under homiletic assertions that the dead are all the same, the socially dead suffer a different destiny; under spirit possession enacted in white séances, black souls remain dispossessed. The erasure of inequality is a prologue to its reinscription.

Ghostwriting

Like the text that Oliver taps out with the white lady's planchette, the slave narrative remains structured by occult sources that are as regulatory as they are esoteric. While the slave narrative originates in an undeniable corporeal history, white spiritualism works to strip the slave's body, text, and memory of materiality.

Connections between the depoliticizing chatter of white spiritualism and black narrative are, at one level, coincidental. Just as table tipping and unexplained noises were gaining notoriety as the Rochester Knockings, so too in Rochester, New York, Frederick Douglass was publishing *The North Star*, below whose offices Harriet Jacobs and her brother were organizing an antislavery reading room. Coincidences between spirit and antislavery activities were hardly accidental. As a colleague wrote to abolitionist and women's rights activist Amy Post in the 1850s, Rochester seemed "the seat of *discovery*" because some "new or wonderful thing [was] being constantly brought to light there."⁴⁹ To guard the Fox sisters' modesty in their first public appearances before audiences at Rochester's Corinthian Hall, Post chaperoned the teenage mediums. Ten years later she accompanied another girl, the "slave girl" Harriet Jacobs, in her first extended public appearance, appending a letter to *Incidents* to vouch for the writer's "remarkable

delicacy of feeling and purity of thought" (203). In spectacles of nontraditional womanhood, one ghostly and the other African American, Post testified to the virtue of medium and fugitive slave alike.

At another level, the connections were ideological: antislavery men and women discovered in spiritualism confirmation of liberal tactics that avoided systemic critique, privileged consensus above change, and universalized bondage as a metaphor applicable to all souls. While spiritualism's flighty character might lead to judgments of the occult as a minor detour in abolitionism, Daniel Cottom claims otherwise, arguing for the shared epistemology of antislavery and spirit activity.⁵⁰ Distrustful of embodiment and passionate about noncontingent freedom, liberal reformers easily fused emancipatory agendas to the occult. Spiritualist and abolitionist messages each appeared in the public sphere via mediation from, on the one hand, clairvoyants who spoke for disembodied souls and, on the other, white editors who spoke for putatively overembodied slaves. In a twist that hints at the liberal overlap uniting different elements of Rochester's reform community, Douglass, whose pronouncements had once needed authentication from white antislavery editors, was called on to verify astounding manifestations seen at the Fox sisters' public exhibitions. The final page of Singular Revelations appeals to the prominent ex-slave as a reliable witness to "more or less of these phenomena." ⁵¹ Douglass plays "Garrison" to the clairvoyant Fox sisters, authenticating the incredible discourse of the socially powerless.

Black (dis)embodiment suffuses the imprecise links between abolition and spiritualism. In an assessment of public séances titled "Post-Mortuum Soiree," Nathaniel Parker Willis esteemed "the two Misses Fox" as "virgins" while he employed a domestic servant with a suspect sexual history. This woman was Harriet Jacobs, who worked in the Willis household even though she could not lay claim to the unblemished womanhood that readers of Willis's *Home Journal* regarded as priceless. Although the *Home Journal* backed the Fox mediums and, presumably, their antislavery prophecies, Jacobs feared that Willis was "too proslavery" to endorse her literary efforts. His wife showed more support, and yet her encouragement took the form of morbid consolation. If Jacobs could not complete her autobiography in this lifetime, Cornelia Willis advised, her narrative would make a "good legacy for

my [Jacobs's] children to do it after my death." ⁵² From beyond the grave was the best place to talk about slavery: the estrangement of necro ideology forever silences the political significance of sexual oppression. Like so many critics as well as defenders of slavery, Cornelia Willis effaced distinctions between the dead and socially dead.

The convergence of a major abolitionist center and the birthplace of popular spiritualism in the same city at the same time would be little more than an interesting footnote were it not for the mediums, disembodied voices, and séances that stand behind the slave narrative. When skeptics questioned the ability of fugitive slaves to produce reliable, unvarnished narratives, they echoed challenges raised about the intelligence that mediums received from the dead. "What proof have we that it is true?" asked Reverend Hiram Mattison in 1853. Finding it difficult to credit a narrative that rests solely on the "bare word" of its author, he seems the sort of prospective reader that the array of authenticating documents supplementing slave narratives was meant to convince.⁵³ Except that Mattison's question refers not to the slave narrative but to spiritualist narrative. In Spirit Rapping Unveiled! he complains that mediums ask the public to invest too much faith in tales from the dearly departed that are, in his opinion, nothing more than fabrications. What makes Mattison's objections ironic, however, is that his criticism of an unreliable amanuensis who relays messages between the living and dead equally applies to his own role in relaying a story from the socially dead. After he attacked mediumship for its suspect narrative techniques, Mattison interviewed a slave woman about her life and published the results as Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon (1861) with his name printed on the title page as the work's author. Echoes between the medium's trance and abolitionist's editorial role are startling: in each situation, a liberal reformer contacts either the socially or literally dead, helping that "person" (could slaves claim personhood any more than ghosts?) publish a story that cannot be written by the speaking subject.

Subject to very different types of possession, neither slave nor medium can summon an authoritative public presence. In the pages of the *Liberator*, for instance, spirits complained of difficulties in addressing the public, a familiar theme for a readership well acquainted with the inarticulate figure of the slave who required intervention from white mediators to publish a narrative of his or her life. Though

blessed with "the tongue of an angel," one spirit lamented to Garrison's readers that "only human tongue [sic] can reach mortal ears" as he explained his need to channel through a female medium.⁵⁴ The structural alignments of a black slave and a white spirit on one side and an abolitionist editor and a spiritualist medium on the other accord Mattison a transcendent position in Louisa Picquet. By transcribing the fugitive speech of an "octoroon" in his role as interlocutor, Mattison behaves as the clairvoyants he finds so disreputable, relating as true those events dictated to him by a voice. In occupying this mediumistic-editorial position, Mattison himself conveniently appears only as a voice in a voyeuristic narrative of sensationalized sexuality and miscegenation. He reaps the same privileges of disembodiment, in mediating Picquet's history, as the somnambulists who speak for the dead. When Mattison's name appears on the title page of the slave woman's narrative, it is as a sort of ghostwriter who represents the socially dead by foregrounding the authority of his own abstract presence.

Slave narrative, like spiritualist narrative, requires the presence of an editor-medium to translate voice into text. Few in the nineteenth century had authority to write, edit, and publish autobiographical performance, especially illiterate ex-slaves who surrendered experience and memory to a white amanuensis. Other notable figures, including the likes of Webster as he outlined the Emancipation Proclamation from beyond the grave or the unbodied soul of Calhoun as he at last admitted the sinfulness of slavery, also mediated their stories via editors and reformers. Like fugitive slaves denied narrative authority, former national political figures needed surrogate storytellers, not because they lacked narratival authority but because they were dead. In an inverse trajectory of the slave's journey, public political leaders now residing beyond the veil visited séances and contacted mediums to transmit posthumous lessons of citizenship. As they enlisted others to represent them to the body politic, the dead demonstrated a liberal pedagogy that asked citizens to consent to disembodiment in public. Virtuous citizens achieved social transparency by letting someone else act in their stead.

Yet not all was virtuous in the erotically charged atmosphere of the séance. Reverend Mattison alleged that spirit writing emanated not from heavenly influence but worldly urges. His *Spirit Rapping*

Unveiled! spoofs mediums' claims of spiritual revelation and divine knowledge with sketches of leering demons as the invisible agents behind the unconscious medium's textual production (see figures 16 and 17). Devilish visages suggest the séance as a promiscuous and anti-Christian setting where men and women clasp hands in dark-ened rooms, exchanging sentiments and perhaps, as Mattison fears, caresses. Adulterous affairs that "abolish the relations of husband and wife" (an attack that Mattison also would level against the slave regime) in favor of intimacies between strangers, séances bred license and libertinism.⁵⁵

The illicit eroticism that pervades contact between spirits, mediums, and séance participants crops up in Mattison's editorial custody of Picquet's slave narrative. Disregard for the marriage covenant is a theme to which the morally minded Mattison returns again and again in his exposé of miscegenation. Unlicensed sexuality surfaces not simply in the content of Louisa Picquet but in the relationship between white male interlocutor and black female respondent. Just as demonic forces whisper depraved suggestions to the passive medium, Mattison insinuates sexually sadistic connotations into the book he confabulates with the "octoroon." Presented as a series of interviews between an antislavery activist and a refugee from New Orleans concubinage, the ostensible purpose of Louisa Picquet is no different from that of many séances: to locate a lost relative. But whereas personages such as Judge Edmonds or Mary Todd Lincoln received messages from deceased loved ones, Picquet hopes to redeem her mother from Texas slavery. Against this sentimental agenda, though, sensational sexuality intrudes on Picquet's story via Mattison's invasive interrogation.

Beginning with questions about adultery and concubines, the pornographic tension of the exchange between near-white female slave and white male interlocutor escalates to the point where Mattison demands details that eroticize her bondage:

- Q.—"Well, how did he whip you?"
- A.—"With the cowhide."
- Q.—"Around your shoulders, or how?"
- A.—"That day he did."
- Q.-"How were you dressed-with thin clothes, or how?"
- A.—"Oh, very thin; with low-neck'd dress."



16 and 17 If writing mediums conveyed messages from the spirit land, was there any assurance that the spirits were benevolent and free of carnal impurity? (Source: Hiram Mattison, *Spirit Rapping Unveiled! An Exposé of the Origin, History, Theology, and Philosophy of Certain Alleged Communications from the Spirit World, by Means of "Spirit Rapping," "Medium Writing," "Physical Demonstrations," etc., with Illustrations [New York: Mason Brothers, 1853].*)

Q.—"How did you say you come to be sold? . . . Were there any others white like you?"

A.—"Oh yes, plenty of them. There was only Lucy of our lot, but others!"

Q.—"Were others stripped and examined?"

A.—"Well, not quite naked, but just same."

In conjunction with assertions that the tales of mulatto and octoroon slaves "reek with fornication and adultery," these probing questions hardly allow Louisa Picquet to serve as a text of liberatory disembodiment.⁵⁶ The narrative fixates on her body, revisiting her humiliation on the auction block, obsessively returning to the lightened complexions of her children, and marveling at her passable whiteness that has been the subject of sexual traffic. To verify this last point, readers are invited to turn to the engraving of Picquet on the title page (see figure 18). The unrelenting sexualization of the "octoroon slave and concubine" (a phrase printed as a header on every other page) deflates most, if not all, of the spiritualizing aspirations of the slave narrative. While it bears structural similarities to stories dictated by disembodied souls, Louisa Picquet has as much of an antispiritualist bent as Spirit Rapping Unveiled!-each text remands culturally suspect persons, near-white slaves and unconscious mediums, to bodies degraded by licentious connotations and sexual traffic. In short, to ask Picquet about the materiality of the body is to invite the presence of a disciplinary regimein this case, the evangelical yet sensational interests of a Methodist minister.

Although the focus on sexuality satisfies Mattison's regulatory desire, *Louisa Picquet* still exerts liberatory potential. The scenario that finds Mattison playing medium—not to Picquet's spirit but her body —holds out the privileges of disembodiment. But it is not Picquet who garners the sociopolitical benefits of disengagement. In a situation all too reminiscent of the conditions of slave labor, her hyperembodiment valorizes Mattison by allowing him to hover above *Louisa Picquet* as interlocutor, amanuensis, and editor. His is the voice that questions her about the spectacle of the auction block. His is the hand that divides her struggles into chapters. His is the polite sensibility that explains suppression of incidents "too horrible and indelicate to

LOUISA PICQUET, THE **OCTOROON:** A TALE OF SOUTHERN SLAVE LIFE. BY REV. H. MATTISON, A. M., PASTOR OF UNION CHAPEL, NEW YORK.

NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, Nos. 5 & 7 MERCER STREET. 1861.

18 Portrait of Louisa Picquet. In case readers did not find this representation of the "octoroon" sufficiently alluring, Mattison writes in a footnote that the "cut on the outside title-page is a tolerable representation of the features of Mrs. P., though by no means a flattering picture." This footnote echoes the conditions of her concubinage by publicly attesting to Mattison's private access to her beauty. (Source: Hiram Mattison, *Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon: A Tale of Southern Slave Life,* in *Collected Black Women's Narratives* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988].)

be read in a civilized country." The good reverend does not merely organize her narrative but also controls representations of her body. What his framing of Picquet's account of adultery, concubinage, and naked beatings makes abundantly clear is that her sexuality has been forced outside the bounds of Christian decency. The editor-author of *Louisa Picquet* undertakes a rescue mission to redeem and regulate the sensuality let loose by Southern institutions, and he achieves this goal by restructuring the incidents in the life of an "octoroon" as a sentimental search for a long-lost mother.

It is only at this appropriately moral juncture that the reverend appears as a subject in the text he has published:

She loves her *mother* as you love yours, if living; and wishes not only to see her, but to bring her from the house of bondage to a land of freedom.

Should any of our readers be willing to contribute to this object, as we hope many will, let them inclose [*sic*], if it be but a single dollar, either to Evans & Co., bankers, Cincinnati, Ohio, or to Rev. H. Mattison, care of Mason Brothers, New York City, by whom all such gifts will be sacredly donated to the *object* for which they are contributed. And as soon as the amount is made up, and the slave-mother released, the public will be duly notified.⁵⁷

While the ambiguous status of "this object" (is Mattison referring to the project to purchase Picquet's mother or to the "slave-mother" herself?) invites speculation about the objectifying tendencies of white antislavery activism, more certain is his justification of paternal authority as a socially sanctioned force that guides a story of disturbing sexuality to sentimental closure. "We had hoped to be able to close with a chapter entitled, 'The long-lost mother restored to her daughter,' but are as yet denied this satisfaction," writes Mattison.⁵⁸ He then follows this open-ended statement with the chapter "Conclusion and Moral of the Whole Story"—and this is too patently a "whole story" whose overexposed female bodies invite Mattison's delicate editorial management. The reformer labors at the narrative's edges, trimming sexual and textual excess even as he concentrates on it, thereby resolving the contradictions of slaves who appear white, Southern ministers who keep human chattel, and black women who cannot claim the protections of true womanhood. Mattison exerts a "benign" influence over Louisa Picquet: the editor-as-medium emerges from a text of

"octoroon" carnality as a man of Christian spirit. His disembodiment is purchased by the labor (here, that of sexual representation) that he demands from his subject. Her body confirms his already liberated soul. In the parallel between mediumship and editorial intervention, spirit possession and narrative dispossession fall out along the same lines: the sexuality of others secures the privileged disembodiment for some.

Douglass and the Antislavery Unconscious

Overdetermined black materiality is indispensable to the production of white social transparency. The transmutation of slave corporeality into privileged disembodiment shapes narratives of citizenship and revolution, particularly in Douglass's *The Heroic Slave*. Rochester's most famous black resident, as I have already noted, attended at least one clairvoyant demonstration of the Fox sisters, and was asked to deliver his opinion as to the truthfulness of the knockings. Although Douglass did not see anything wondrous in the bodies of young white girls, spiritualism underpins his presentation of an abstract liberal agenda in *The Heroic Slave*. In order to narrate a story of slave revolt, Douglass turns to mediumship as a way of representing, dematerializing, and ultimately privileging African American presence.

Clairvoyants like the Fox sisters did not claim to create otherworldly truth but simply presented themselves as passive conduits for larger miracles. Somnolent and senseless, they staged not omniscience but unconsciousness as the point of access to messages from the dead. Douglass employs this strategy in *The Heroic Slave* where a slave revolt is recounted by a white sailor who is unconscious while the enslaved strike for freedom. Felled to the deck by a blow from a black revolutionary, this blacked-out sailor serves as an ideal medium to (under)represent the spectacle of black rebellion to Douglass's white audience. Just as mediums sat in blithe ignorance of an audience's rude stare, this member of the slaver's crew admits that the revolt "knocked" him "senseless," forcefully inducing a version of the somnambulist's trance so that he, too, is immune to the jarring of the historical world.⁵⁹ Mesmerized girls remained deaf to loud voices, clapping hands, and pistol shots; in emulation of this sublime posture, the

sailor is unmoved by the sights and sounds that occasion the shedding of white blood by black hands. His unconsciousness spares Douglass's audience the alarming details of a violent revolt perpetrated by black masculinity. Because he recounts events that transpired during his state of insensibility, the sailor, Tom Grant, narrates a text that, like a clairvoyant episode, is divorced from the body, especially black bodies stained with white blood.

Grant's gap-ridden story locates white unconsciousness as a necessary antecedent to black liberation. In order to imagine freedom for slaves, whites have to be rendered unconscious of the black body and its all-too-historical propensity to resist servitude by violent means. The slave's tale, particularly as it finds its way into the mouths of sympathetic whites, does not so much liberate the body as it liberates *from* the body. Once the messy materiality of slave rebellion is sublimated, the sailor serves a medium of revelation, imparting an abstract political "truth" in place of a spiritual one. Leaping over the social meanings of the embodiment, Grant declares,

Our difference of color was the only ground for difference of action. It was not that his principles were wrong in the abstract; for they are the principles of 1776. But I could not bring myself to recognize their application to one whom I deemed my inferior.⁶⁰

His is a paradoxical stance that acknowledges the black right to revolution by denying the black body's specificity. His is a contradictory recognition that accepts a black language of national citizenship on the transnationality of the Caribbean Sea and "in the abstract," everywhere but in the precise here and now of a slaveholding republic. Historical unconsciousness presides over Grant's narrative: like Poyen who disavows the social significance of race as he watches somnambulism among West Indian slaves, the U.S. sailor fails to respond to a "difference of color." He pursues the universalism of liberal reform, *grant*ing slaves access to radical democratic politics on the condition that such politics be reconceived beyond the body's physicality.

Unconsciousness—as a storytelling strategy crucial to *The Heroic Slave's* conflicted universalism—owes one last debt to spiritualism's narratival influence: hierarchy. While at an abstract level the bondsman Madison Washington receives the sailor's approbation, black materiality garners his scorn, immuring self-emancipated slaves in

minstrel-like buffoonery. His musings about the materiality of the body return liberated contraband to the fraught corporeality of "darky" antics that play to white spectators. Even though he has just uttered a hosanna of sorts to African American political theorizing as on par with white revolutionary traditions, Grant desublimates his tribute by demeaning the Bahamian soldiers who escort the "property" from the Creole:

By order of the authorities a company of *black* soldiers came on board, for the purpose, as they said, of protecting the property. These impudent rascals, when I called on them to assist me in keeping the slaves on board, sheltered themselves adroitly under their instructions only to protect property, — and said they did not recognize *persons* as *property*. I told them that by the laws of Virginia and the laws of the United States, the slaves on board were as much property as the barrels of flour in the hold. At this the stupid blockheads showed their *ivory*, rolled up their white eyes in horror, as if the idea of putting men on a footing with merchandise were revolting to their humanity.⁶¹

Douglass ironically juxtaposes Grant's fleeting humanitarian largesse and his abiding use of racial stereotype. Within white unconsciousness, black embodiment is a liability that marks the breakdown of a universal framework in which white and black men understand one another. Because black mental capacities (in Grant's mind) are blunted by excessive bodies, because the soldiers are "stupid blockheads," they fail to establish an intuitive sympathy to echo the magnetic connection that galvanized Grant to Washington's purpose. At one level, the soldiers exploit white stereotypes of blackness to the political advantage of Washington and his comrades. But at another level, this final scene in *The Heroic Slave* reveals revolutionary interracial alliance as a fragile phenomena built on momentary suspensions of white consciousness.

In thinking through vexed black materiality, Douglass recognizes that representations of slave embodiment too often border on the sadistic and pornographic. *Louisa Picquet's* obsessive mention of whips and naked bodies exemplifies this danger. In the section preceding Grant's unconscious account, Douglass smooths over the difficulties of black embodiment by having an omniscient narrator refuse representation:

We pass over the hurry and bustle, the brutal vociferations of the slavedrivers in getting their unhappy gang in motion for Richmond; and we need not narrate every application of the lash to those who faltered in the journey.⁶²

To represent the body is to abject the subject. While Rochester's ghostly milieu mirrors Douglass's strategy for relocating African American rights and dignity away from corporeality, the various textual positions orchestrated in *The Heroic Slave* reveal that spiritualist alternatives to black materiality continue to engage a representational field laden with power. As an omniscient narrator describing the brutality of the slave coffle, Douglass strives to "not narrate"; he disembodies blacks when they most suffer the injustice of unequal representation. The privilege not to have a body shelters the victims of spectacle and voyeurism. Yet as Grant's abstract political equation also shows, a realm of pure (un)consciousness establishes a hierarchy in which the white imaginary too often trumps black democracy.

To argue for the constitutive role of white spirituality in discursive constructions of the black body is not to forget the African origins of the white middle-class interest in psychology, paranormal phenomena, and the unconscious. At the nexus of spirit messages and slave narrative, liberal (un)consciousness absorbs and then discards the black body as the ground for privileged white disembodiment. To search for everlasting equality was to return to *and* ignore the temporary bondage of the body; to speak of the liberated spirit was to speak of *and* forget enslaved blacks. The parasitic relationship of white spirit and black body was subject to reversal: African Americans, like Harriet Jacobs, historicized spiritualism and transformed its necro politics into a material project. Theirs is a return to the occult that puts flesh on ghosts and gives life to the socially dead.

Incidents in the (After)life of a Slave Girl

The history of Jacobs, specifically the conditions that frame her 1861 slave narrative, unveils the role of white spiritual discourse in structuring black expression. This relation is contradictory and tense for a number of reasons. As a genealogy that runs back to Poyen and New

World mesmerism shows, psychopolitical technologies idealize disembodiment as a political virtue by meditating on the black bodies it represses. While disembodiment seems liberatory in narratives such as *Louisa Picquet* and *The Heroic Slave*, spiritualism also gloms onto the African American text to *re*appropriate the so-called black arts for white use.⁶³ But in a final turn, *Incidents* accepts this dematerializing influence only to reanimate the occult with specific African American cultural memories that move away from the abstraction and alienation of slavery's social death.

After narration of Jacobs (as Linda Brent) is said and done, Amy Post appends a letter of reference to the slave autobiography. Writing from Rochester, Post acts as a literary duenna for Jacobs's entry into the public sphere-not at all unlike her chaperoning the Fox sisters at public séances. Because Jacobs's "sensitive spirit shrank from publicity," Post coaxes her to appear before readers (203). Although the "slave girl" cannot claim the virgin status granted to the Fox sisters by the popular press, her benefactress confides that deep within resides "her spirit-naturally virtuous" (203). Post's letter attests that Jacobs transcends her former status as slave; she assures readers that the book's author has been successfully estranged from the indelicate corporeal history she relates. Freedom is not found in Jacobs's story, which too clearly dredges up a sexual past. Rather, a liberatory narrative comes in the endorsement of an abolitionist-spiritualist-feminist that frees the "slave girl" from a moral economy of sin and guilt. Post never refers to bondage as material deprivation and instead concentrates on the "mental agony" that renders the memory of slavery "galling to a spirit" such as Jacobs's (204). She ignores Jacobs's corrupted body to rescue her soul. A universally shared interiority is exclusionary, barring the "slave girl's" sexuality - the very material basis of her oppression as well as resistance-from the moral confirmation that Post's appendix provides. While Mattison as a debunker of spiritualism insists on a public presentation of Picquet's "octoroon" body, Post as a spiritualist veils the overdetermined female body with the socially hard-to-determine soul.

Abstraction of Brent's specific history into a general portrait of human suffering is not accomplished in the one fell swoop of Post's letter, however. This spiritualization was the culmination of a process begun ten years earlier in Rochester. In 1849, Amy and Isaac Post in-

vited Jacobs to share their domestic circle while Jacobs's brother traveled as an abolitionist lecturer.⁶⁴ This household where tables tipped and spirits rapped became the stage for the "slave girl's" dematerialization. Jacobs's incorporation in the reformers' home compares with Priscilla's snow-swept entrance at the Blithedale farmhouse: although the utopians in Hawthorne's novel agree not to poke into the seamstress's past, her secrets supply Coverdale's narrative with libidinal energy much as Jacobs's sexual history underwrote the Posts' liberal activism. Jacobs's body contributed to the paranormal domesticity of their home, and long before her autobiography was printed, Isaac published her story as a spiritualist narrative that veiled Brent's sexuality, disembodying her social identity as the "spirit" that Amy repeatedly mentions in the letter tacked on to Incidents. This pattern exemplifies the turbulent coexistence of the black body and white disembodiment: spiritualist messages borrowed from African American narrative suppress the species being of the black body as unsuitable for universal citizenship, even though that ideal first originated in the dematerialization of the "slave girl's" body.

When Jacobs entered the Posts' home, it was brimming with reformist energy. Amy had just attended the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, the previous year. Her awakened feminist consciousness readily fit with spiritualism, which "became a magnet for social and political radical thought," particularly women's rights and abolitionism.⁶⁵ She and her husband remained deeply involved in both reforms, though Jacobs viewed their fusion of spiritualism and abolition with skepticism. Writing to her onetime benefactors about the forthcoming British publication of her narrative as The Deeper Wrong (1862), Jacobs exclaimed that "we poor women has [sic] always been too meek," a thought that makes her "begin to think about poor Leah of the Bible, not Leah of the spirits." 66 Her letter points to the abiding interest of these two Rochester reformers in clairvoyants like "Leah of the spirits," the eldest Fox sister, for their mystic ability to spell out democratic agendas. But such democracy threatens to make Jacobs-a historical person with an even more historical body-disappear as though she were a ghost. Her letter also signals a roundabout attempt to dissociate herself and her story from spiritualism. Jacobs's reluctance to entertain thoughts about a medium follows her refusal years earlier to invite someone to ghostwrite her slave

narrative and accede to Cornelia Willis's recommendation that Stowe rework her story in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853). Jacobs suspects that spiritualism—especially as practiced by Rochester reformers will dematerialize her history and experience.

As the energies of feminism, abolitionism, and spiritualism were animating Amy's activism, Jacobs began a nine-month sojourn in this reformist household. At roughly the same time, Isaac happened on a technological innovation (of sorts) that greatly speeded transmission of messages across vast reaches of space. His discovery enabled the once inarticulate to write — a theme that Amy and Jacobs would stress in the letters they exchanged. What Isaac developed was a new way of talking with the dead. Chatting with spirits had become a laborious process of asking yes-or-no questions and waiting for a specified number of knocks to signal either an affirmative or a negative answer. But the spirits gained greater freedom of expression when Isaac suggested that the alphabet be read aloud so that disembodied souls could rap at letters to spell out words, sentences, and in many instances, entire books. On the cutting edge of spirit technology, he was among the first to profit from his "invention," publishing Voices from the Spirit World in 1852.

Though he wrote it, Post did not claim authorship for this book. Under his mediumship, the text was written "by the hand of Isaac Post" yet narrated by the famous dead of U.S. history. When the departed such as Franklin, Calhoun, Penn, and Washington returned, they came to talk about social death. In one séance, the father of his country guided the hand of Post to write:

Only reflect, that at the time I was in active bodily life, there was the great number of six hundred thousand slaves. Now there is no less than three millions. I cannot find words to express my abhorrence of this accursed system of slavery. I believe if the views here glanced at, were universally carried out, the National difficulties in regard to Slavery, would be ended, and the white and sable brother would live in harmony together, and blessings such as no one can imagine, would follow.⁶⁷

As Washington's soul addresses slavery, he is reduced to the position of the unauthorized ex-slave who requires white mediation to authenticate and even write down his/her history. In both slave and spiritualist narratives, the editor/medium ventriloquizes a self cut off from the

normal relations of civil society. At the convergence of antislavery editor and clairvoyant medium, socially dead slave and dead person, and spiritualism and abolition, Washington prophesizes a timeless time of homosocial accord. Democratic politics in this regard are based on an "esprit de corpse" where men without bodies promise to love one another.⁶⁸

Interrupting this ghostly procession of national bodies, a disembodied woman contacts the medium in Voices from the Spirit World. Using Isaac to recount her story, she conveys a tale of seduction, shame, and deathly impulses that bears an uncanny resemblance to the autobiography that Brent tells in Incidents. Though no evidence exists that Amy indiscreetly revealed to Isaac the details of her sisterly confidences with Jacobs, Brent does suspect that her sexual history becomes a topic of conversation between at least one respectable married couple. On her arrival in Philadelphia, she divulges to Mr. Durham, a black minister who harbors the fugitive, that she is a mother but not a wife, a confession that replays the moment when Jacobs said in a letter to Amy, "Your purity of heart and kindly sympathies won me at one time to speak of my children." 69 The morning after Brent's disclosure, she takes leave of Durham's wife and wonders "whether her husband had repeated to her what I told him. I suppose he had" (162). Her doubts well apply to Amy and Isaac Post, especially since Isaac's mediumistic contact with a disembodied female soul lays bare an adulterous history. Not long after Jacobs departed the Posts' home, a departed spirit visited Isaac and guided his hand to write a narrative of sex, seduction, and lost womanly virtue. Her story begins as does Brent's: just as Brent remains innocent of slaveholding culture's prurient interest in her body until she "entered on my fifteenth year — a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl" (27), so for the spirit of Sarah Sharp, "my life passed with nothing in particular to narrate, until I had grown to be a woman" and then men begin to show sexual interest in her womanhood. Each woman finds, however, that she has too much to tell when her body enters a sexual traffic in which innocence affords little protection. Like Jacobs, Sharp represses the scene of seduction, alluding to her fall with the admission that she was "completely taken captive by his kindness and affection."⁷⁰ As Brent could have told her, a lover's "kindness and attachment" can prove powerfully seductive, making amorous captivity appear "something akin to freedom" (55).

Both Brent and Sharp narrate sexual incidents in the same way-by suppressing lurid content. Each tells by not telling, refusing to exhibit the female body because such a display would inevitably repeat their sexualization. The "metaphoric loopholes" that Valerie Smith identifies as key to the narrative logic of Incidents also appear in Isaac's "Communication from Sarah Sharp."⁷¹ Brent announces her second pregnancy out of the midst of one such ellipsis, referring to repeated premarital sexual activity only in passing as a subordinate clause: "When Dr. Flint learned that I was again to be a mother, he was exasperated beyond measure" (77). Whereas her first liaison, with a Mr. Sands, can be chalked up to momentary girlish indiscretion or a desperately conceived protective strategy, a second pregnancy, unmistakable evidence of renewed trysts with her white lover, betrays a desire to return to what sentimental reading publics saw as improprieties of the flesh. Because Brent argues that the slave girl should be judged by a different moral standard than the one applied to bourgeois white women, she at first may not be all that reluctant to acknowledge her sin, particularly since her fall from virtue also functions as an indictment of the impossible constraints of true womanhood for slave women. But because her body is subject to controlling sexual scrutiny from Dr. Flint as well as the readers of Incidents, she refrains from discussing the body that commits "sin" more than once. The ghost voice of Sharp employs exactly this evasive technique as she broaches her sexual history. Like Brent, she mentions sexual activity only as a subordinated addendum in order to avoid a strict accounting of her body's transgressions. Before her lover kills her, Sharp asks him, "Had you no pity for my daughter" to leave her motherless?⁷² Speaking as a spirit to Isaac as a medium, she reveals the fact of her motherhood only after her lover has slit her throat. From the morally sanitized space of spirit narrative, Sharp alienates and dispossesses her body. Like the socially dead "slave girl," the literally dead white heroine employs a "loophole of retreat," deferring mention of sexual activity until it comes under the auspices of disembodied motherhood.

Although slave narratives hardly afford the privileged disembodiment of spiritualism, these unwed mothers deploy gaps around problematic corporeality so that they can concentrate on their souls instead. With no desire to expose their sexuality through its representation, Brent and Sharp dilate on the tribulations of the spirit.

Not so much the loss of virginity but the loss of esteem is what each suffers. "My self-respect was gone!" bemoans Brent just before her grandmother labels her a "disgrace" and casts her out (56). Sharp also experiences rejection and desolation, realizing "that I must lose my reputation among those whom I had been used to lovingly associate" as the consequence of seduction.⁷³ Her spirit laments to Isaac, "I felt the need of a kind word, but in its stead, I met the cold repulse"⁷⁴— a sentiment little different from Brent's ineffective pleas to the grandmother who "had always been so kind to me! *So* kind!" (57). Conveyed as similar stories, one to abolitionist-spiritualist Amy Post and the other to spiritualist-abolitionist Isaac Post, *Incidents* and "Communication from Sarah Sharp" redeem the corrupted body as the material occasion of the soul's trial.

This sympathy between disembodied soul sisters runs in the face of the expressly nonsympathetic, antitranscendent, and historically specific chords of Brent's autobiography. Appropriation and renarration of the slave girl's sexual harassment as the seduction of a ghostly white woman blunts Incidents's suspicion of white women readers. Yes, sentimental assertions that Sharp and Brent-or for that matter, Northern white women and slave women — share the same emotional distress and spiritual trials represent a progressive attitude at a time when biology, anthropology, phrenology, and scriptural interpretation insisted on the separateness of whites from other "races." But even within a potentially radical sympathy that aligns Isaac's white female spirit and the "slave girl" of Jacobs's title, exclusion works to ensure that the black body and its historical experience merit no consideration. To transmogrify the slave girl into a fallen white woman's ghost is to push for an abstract moral standard that, at one moment, implies that unregulated sexuality has no color and, at the next, insists that unregulated sexuality as a specific practice must be "black." Remaking the black body as a white spirit helps create a dead identity qualified to enter the public sphere. The propensity to read the black body as a revelation of a white spirit recasts power-laden relations between mediums and subjects, between blacks and whites, as the power of sympathy.

Histories of the Not There

But Incidents and "Communication from Sarah Sharp" are not the same story, and so should not be read as kindred expressions. Ironically, this divergence becomes most pronounced at the point where Jacobs adopts the ghostly, sentimental style of the Post household and Sharp's postmortem confession. Although morbidity creeps into Brent's thoughts on freedom, she never accepts necrophilic politics that idealize disconnection and disembodiment. But neither does she outright reject the spiritual, especially given nagging questions about the materiality of the "slave girl's" body. Instead, Brent stages scenes of paranormal communication as material encounters in which the full force of repressed history comes to light. Like the messages received at séances, Incidents speaks obsessively of death, with Brent going so far as to imagine her children as ghosts. Yet Jacobs's confrontation with the spiritual is not so much strange as strategic: she turns to depoliticizing, deathly images because it is the afterlife that threatens to devalue her commitment to a specific freedom that includes others. As Teresa Goddu argues, the dematerialization of history is a risk that arises with the use of sentimental models to narrate the reality of slavery by describing it as a horror.⁷⁵ Jacobs counters this spiritualizing tendency by historicizing the higher "truths" that mesmerists such as Poyen, editors such as Mattison, and mediums such as Isaac Post discovered in the so-called black arts.

Brent and Sharp most resemble one another in their morbid plans to redeem the sinful body. As she contemplates her degradation, Sarah longs for death: "My life became wretched. . . . Many times I craved that I might be taken from the evils with which I was surrounded."⁷⁶ Her lover grants this wish by murdering her, and now when she speaks to Isaac, she seems close to a contentment that she never knew in life. Similarly, Brent reveals, "I had often prayed for death" (61). But she backs away from any macabre activism, perceiving how longings for a postpolitical haven annihilate the specificity of the history that she and her children suffer. Brent's worry, however, is that others continue to wish the resolution of death on her. As her grandmother and a sympathetic white neighbor watch Brent's struggles, they jointly emplot the "slave girl's" life along the necrophilic lines of the story that

Isaac tells for Sharp—a story that demurely concludes in death and overcomes the body's history. After Brent confesses her loss of virtue, her grandmother upbraids her, "O Linda! has it come to this? I had rather see you dead than to see you as you now are. You are a disgrace to your dead mother" (56). Her words are part accusation and part death wish that Brent inhabit a nonconditional world immune to the sexual and racial complexity that besets sociohistorical life in Edenton, North Carolina in the 1830s. Her grandmother's white tea partner, Miss Fanny, shares this fatalistic aversion to historical struggle:

She wished that I and all my grandmother's family were at rest in our graves, for not until then should she feel any peace about us. The good old soul did not dream that I was planning to bestow peace upon her, with regard to myself and my children; not by death, but by securing our freedom. (89)

Squeamish and judgmental about the physical immorality of the slave girl's body, these women would ask: What about the immortality of the soul, *Linda*? It's a trap: Brent cannot safely respond to this question within the terms set by a culture that valorizes disembodiment. To answer is to take up a lethal discourse of citizenship, which regulates subjects via a series of processes—purification and abstraction, redemption and regeneration, transcendence and disconnection—that deploy hierarchies beyond the body.

But *Incidents* stands neither as an out-and-out rejection of spectral politics nor an absolute embrace of practical, embodied solutions to sociopolitical oppression. A wholly material politics excludes the soul that becomes "free at last," but it also preserves the cultural heritage and family history made so fragile by slavery. Jacobs trades in the "tender of memory," as Stephanie Smith puts it, to articulate "a narrative where liberty does not require death."⁷⁷ Though Jacobs contests the morbid character of U.S. political thought, she in no way refuses to suture death to the political. As she forges this connection, though, she is careful to add one more link that contextualizes idealized notions of death with the abjection of the slave's social death. Her depiction of the fast-becoming-anonymous graves of her parents captures a ghostly legacy that is highly politicized, yet also too fleeting to be detected by the standard yardsticks of material politics:

The graveyard was in the woods, and twilight was coming on. Nothing broke the death-like stillness except the occasional twitter of a bird. My spirit was overawed by the solemnity of the scene. . . . A black stump, at the head of my mother's grave, was all that remained of a tree my father had planted. His grave was marked by a small wooden board, bearing his name, the letters of which were nearly obliterated. (90)

What are the material conditions of a history that is being erased? Even though the graphic markers of her parents' graves are crumbling into illegibility, Brent hopes that what is *not there*, that what is as invisible as memory, can provide a foundation for resistance to the institutional forces that circumscribe the slave girl's body, sexuality, and family.

Can a history that is not there have palpable consequences? If "the not there is a seething presence," to invoke Avery Gordon's contention, then Brent reads her parents' vanishing graves as an imperative to reinvest the spiritual, the dead, and the departed—in short, all that is without historical substance—with the meaning of history. Hounded by questions about the materiality of her body and immortality of the soul, Brent returns to the "burying ground of the slaves." She offers a single response to these questions that pull in opposite directions by embodying ghosts and their history. In the graveyard's "death-like stillness," as she contemplates her dead parents, her ghostly mediation does not spell the death of political thinking but instead rededicates her to radical action. Brent realizes that "to be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects."⁷⁸ Presented as elements of black consciousness and not white unconsciousness, the dead recall Brent to echoes of resistance:

As I passed the wreck of the old meeting house, where, before Nat Turner's time, the slaves had been allowed to meet for worship, I seemed to hear my father's voice coming from it, bidding me not to tarry till I reached freedom or the grave. I rushed on with renovated hopes. (91)

Not a slave meeting but the distant shadow of one, this ruin recontextualizes escape as a collective action tied both to family and African American history. Immaterial conditions—a disembodied father, memories of communal gatherings, a building that no longer stands—

brace her decision to intervene in the institutional and legal identities that indifferently control the lives of her children.

Her allusion to Nat Turner suggests that ghostly thoughts, while often hierarchical and dispossessive, can also foment defiance. Her stance that the spiritual-if it can be rematerialized-carries liberatory potential pits her against one of the most cited authorities on revolutionary struggle, Frantz Fanon. Unlike Fanon's estimation of the occult as a backward tendency, Jacobs portrays slavery's hauntings as tangible vestiges of a radical legacy that have been suppressed. Clearly, The Wretched of the Earth references a very different historical world than the antebellum South. Since the "occult sphere" deludes native inhabitants that "the zombies are more terrifying than the settlers," the concrete work of liberation is derailed as people participate in what Fanon views as ultimately misguided and empty rituals.⁷⁹ But in Incidents, the spiritual acquires a reality as palpable as Fanon's counterspiritual landscape of barbwire and guns. Her "father's voice" speaks of communal contexts and historical actors such as Turner; the dead do not always retreat from the sociopolitical world and instead, in this case, encourage magnetic sympathy with a violent critic of the slave regime. Reference to the 1831 slave rebellion in Southampton, Virginia furnishes Jacobs with a potent precedent for actualizing an occult politics since Turner interpreted his visions as a divine go-ahead for his revolutionary uprising against white rule. Decades before they rapped for the Fox sisters, the spirits spoke, albeit much more violently, to Turner. His discovery of "drops of blood on corn as though it were dew from heaven" in conjunction with visions of "white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle" impelled him and his comrades to contest social reality in murderous terms.⁸⁰ His trances tell him that a redistribution of social justice is at hand, and despite the millennial cast of such prophesizing, Turner sets about translating this heavenly promise into a historical event.

In pursuing a revolutionary memory as fragile as a ruin, *Incidents* recuperates black liberation theology from its subvention under white spiritualism. Though at a broad level mesmerists and spiritualists borrowed the West African religious practices of somnambulism and trance, and though at a specific level Isaac Post adapted the "slave girl's" story to spiritualist narrative, Jacobs reclaims the souls of black folk. Although Brent's mystical memories would seem evidence of

Jacobs's consent to white spiritual politics, *Incidents* rejects such dematerializing effects. Her aim is to historicize the eternal and disembodied in terms of their specific material effects on the "slave girl" and her community. Troubled by the thought of her children as dead or in the hands of a speculator, Brent is lulled by the mournful music of serenaders to suspend her burdened consciousness and forget an uncertain social world. Like Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance*, she escapes behind the veil. But whereas Priscilla "beholds the Absolute!" as Westervelt proclaims, Brent sees a less abstract sight: an apparition of her children.

I listened till the sounds did not seem like music, but like the moaning of children. It seemed as if my heart would burst. I rose from my sitting posture, and knelt. A streak of moonlight was on the floor before me, and in the midst of it appeared the forms of my two children. They vanished; but I had seen them distinctly. Some will call it a dream, others a vision. I know not how to account for it, but it made a strong impression on my mind, and I felt certain something had happened to my little ones. (107–8)

His vindictiveness backed by the force of Southern law, Flint claims Brent's children as property, frustrating her desires to shelter, nurture, and protect—in essence, to be a mother for—her children. In the dark about their whereabouts and legal fate, she only has imaginary access to them. "I had seen their spirits in my room," she says, but the miraculous sight proves cold and unsatisfying since it fails to clarify their social identity or institutional location (108). Spirit communication confuses the serenity of death with the anguish of slavery's social death. Are her children at last beyond the slave power? Or, have they been purchased as chattel by their father to be freed? Does Flint retain possession of her son and daughter in order to exert control over Brent even in her fugitive status? Her trance is a phantasmatic yet still historical record of her anxiety over "whether my children were dead, or whether they were sold" (108).

While this spectral vision offers no solace to the slave mother, the spirits of dead children offered many white sentimentalists moral guidance and closure in the face of financial distress and household conflict. Stowe's Little Eva comes readily to mind for the postmortem influence she showers on St. Clare's indifferent soul. Visitations from

children's spirits were held to be common paranormal occurrences (spiritualists easily jumped over the contradiction since the paranormal was an everyday event), witnessed especially by women suffering under the strain of poverty, abandonment, or a husband's intemperance. As one clairvoyant claimed,

[Dead] little children are selected to accompany their parents during their stay on earth, and the mother is often surrounded by developed spirits even of those children whose birth she had numbered with those living or dead. And when in some dark hour of trial, when the hopes and anticipations of life have been blasted, when the mother is struggling under an affliction worse than death—that of a drunken husband—or when left on earth without a husband, with children surrounding her, and she striving to support and educate them, or when from cause the bond which binds the husband and wife is sundered, then it is that the spirits of their children are sent to earth, clothed in forms of dazzling beauty, and gifted with powers to soothe and calm the troubled spirit of that mother, gently and yet serenely instilling hope, where before was dark despair.⁸¹

Spirit children are consoling because, unlike surviving sons and daughters who get hungry or sick, they require no nourishment, clothing, or education. But for Brent, the freedom to fulfill maternal responsibilities to her son and daughter is precisely what is denied. Though blessed with an ability to assuage mothers in times of domestic crisis, spirit children have little power to "soothe and calm" maternal anxieties created by slavery's domestic traffic. Against the sentimental promise of dead children who behave better than living ones, Brent wonders whether her children are socially dead or simply dead.

Even as she concedes that many will label Brent's experience a "dream" or "vision," Jacobs refuses to dismiss the apparition of her children as otherworldly. Mary Todd Lincoln may have contacted her dead son, and one of the Fox sisters may have carried on a love affair with a dashing explorer after he perished in the Arctic, but Brent has only deathly visions of the living. The spiritual does not represent an escape from history; the occult comes to her as a distressing echo of Flint's spite in particular and the slave system in general, both of which hold her hopes for son Benny and daughter Ellen hostage. Their souls are not dead but full of historical life. As a distraught mother,

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she turns to morbid sentimentalism to commune with those who are living yet rendered socially dead by slavery. Her trance is a manifestation of a diasporic heritage, not an offshoot of the popular spiritualism in vogue among her Northern "sisters." Readers of *Incidents*, assumes Jacobs, will find that the description of her dematerialized children "illustrates the superstition of the slaves" (107). Rather than actively reclaim the *borrowed* West African practices that influenced U.S. mesmerism and spiritualism in the first place, Jacobs goads readers to identify this paranormal episode as an emanation of slave culture, not white psychology. In Jacobs's hands, the occult evasion of sociohistorical phenomena becomes instead a materialist confrontation that affirms ties to her displaced children and heritage.

Historically weighted, her spirit vision falls short of transcending contestation and discord. Unlike the sleepwalking medium who achieves liberatory insensibility of her surroundings, the "slave girl" become slave mother experiences second sight as the recognition of contingency. Her brush with the spiritual has material consequences that jeopardize members of her community who conceal her whereabouts. Unnerved by ghostly images of her children, Brent threatens to make a noise that will expose her hiding place and implicate the white mistress as well as the slaves who shuttle her fugitive body from locked storerooms to crawl spaces beneath kitchen floors. Betty, the cook, marks the danger in this way: "You's got de highsterics. I'll sleep wid you to-night, 'cause you'll make a noise, and ruin missis. Something has stirred you up mightily" (108). Despite momentary clairvoyance, Brent does not reap the privileges of disembodiment. Even as her intense anxiety over the fates of the children she has birthed—an emotion Betty aptly renders as a form of hysteria-endangers others, only the presence of another person can assuage Brent's uncontrolled emotion. What Brent sees in a "streak of moonlight" more than reconnects her to family and a cultural past; her spirit vision lays bare how physical safety and emotional stability are twined about community. As Hawthorne avers in the preface to The Scarlet Letter, "moonlight" serves as an ideal "medium" for estranging the familiar and domesticating the ghostly so that "the Actual and Imaginary may meet. . . . Ghosts might enter here, without affrighting us."82 In Brent's case, however, the actual and imaginary more than meet; they articulate a deep interconnectedness that challenges fantasies of liberal individu-

alism. Rewritten as the slave superstition from whence it derived, the occult secures not independence but contingency, not autonomy but community.

If the master's property temporarily manifests itself as spirit, then Brent herself runs the risk of becoming a permanent absence in the lives of her children. Although freezing temperatures, insect bites, and atrophied muscles painfully remind the fugitive that she does have a body, Brent, by hiding in the attic garret, figuratively occupies the position of a maternal spirit hovering above the home in white melodramas.⁸³ Popular novels by Southern women dote on the plantation mistress for her almost total abstraction from the historical contexts of labor, a virtue enabled by the onerous physicality linked to black bodies. An angel in the house of bondage appears at length in proslavery novels by Caroline Lee Hentz, Eliza Dupuy, Caroline Gilman, and Marion Harland, but she is best (and most briefly) characterized in Mary Bradley's Douglass Farm (1853). As in Incidents, a maternal figure hovers over a disrupted domestic circle in Bradley's juvenile tale. Children run away to the North, a father treats "his children as if they were strangers and not his own," a mother strives to unite her disintegrating family around the hearthstone: the central plot elements of Douglass Farm correspond to pivotal moments in the story that Brent tells. But unlike the heroine of Incidents who painfully inhabits a body, the spirit of maternal influence who heals patriarchal injustice and family separation in Bradley's novel is never anything more than spirit. As the once wayward son in this tale of mothering from beyond the grave says, "Our dead mother will be even better than a living one." 84 Disembodiment does not hinder her ability to nurture her motherless babes but, in fact, heightens her moral sway.

As a socially dead slave mother, in contrast, Brent watches over her children's welfare *and* resists the saccharine pull of spiritualization that would idealize disembodiment at the expense of her own culturally specific maternality. She confesses to her daughter, Ellen, the historical conditions that dictate her ghostlike presence in her children's lives: "I took her in my arms and told her I was slave, and that was the reason she must never say she had seen me" (140). Mother teaches daughter how her fugitive status demands that they consent to a lack of presence. Brent is careful to explain that this temporary demate-

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rialization occurs as her daughter "nestled in my arms" (140). Ellen's touch confirms that her mother who has been disappeared, does possess a social presence and so belongs to a network of familial relations. Absent motherhood rests not on the perfection of moral influence, as in *Douglass Farm*, but on the tactics of repression mandated by slave law. The spiritual is not eternal; instead, disembodied mothers are a matter of historical necessity.⁸⁵

Amid collisions of abolitionism and spiritualism, Incidents, like Douglass's novella and Picquet's narrative, exposes the borrowings and erasures that align white interiority to oppressed subjects in the Americas. As equality thus becomes a psychological commodity, Jacobs essays to withstand the interiorization of political reform that occurs in nineteenth-century occult public spheres. The spiritual in these texts, then, involves much more than an appropriation of white Christianity for black purposes: the otherworldly is instead a critical reclamation of an Africanist legacy sublated by a liberal world that cathected the white soul to black bodies. Spiritualism hides a history of discursive predations that alternately construct, foreground, and elide the corporeal utility of West Indian slaves, Picquet's sexuality, Douglass's masculine hero, and Jacobs's motherhood. But with the supposed black arts of the occult, this genealogy is recuperated, and the spiritual is reinvested with political meaning much as socially dead slave children are reanimated in a sliver of moonlight.

Saying "Nothing" about History

Readers of Jacobs's slave narrative are also readers of a slave body, a fact that tends to de-authorize her intervention in spiritual matters. Fearful that readers will overlook her account of numbed joints and crippled limbs even as they give credence to sexual myths about black women, she admits to the dubiousness of Brent's story:

I hardly expect that the reader will credit me, when I affirm that I lived in that little dismal hole, almost deprived of light and air, and with no space to move my limbs, for nearly seven years. But it is a fact; and to me a sad one, even now; for my body still suffers from the effects of that long imprisonment, to say nothing of my soul. Members of my family, now living in New York and Boston, can testify to the truth of what I say. (148)

She invokes her body to exempt her soul. Using the language of an affidavit, Brent offers material evidence for her history while placing the spiritual beyond fuller discussion ("to say nothing of my soul"). She calls on "members of my family" to rescue her—this time from an unspecific history that would incorporate her into ritual displays of white interiority. Deployed as living legal evidence, her body withstands sublimation. "To say nothing of my soul" amounts to a political stance in a sentimental culture that beseeches the oppressed to speak in spiritualist tones so that the enfranchised can forget the material nature of the ideological structures that secure their own privilege.

Except that "to say nothing of my soul" is an apophasis that summons up the soul via understatement.⁸⁶ The magnitude of the soul's suffering is so great as to defy description. Her soul may exceed representation but not historicity, however. In the doubleness of this expression that both foregrounds and veils the soul, Brent registers the contingency of black spiritual beliefs within a dominant culture that has shown itself all too disposed to abstract blackness to effect white disembodiment. To say "nothing" is to make a statement that documents repression; by speaking of the difficulty of talking about the soul, Brent suggests the conflicted history that shapes the ahistorical entities -- ghosts, spirits, souls -- that materialize and dematerialize in the pages of Incidents. The inexpressible trauma she has endured in her seven years' hiding is not the sole source of this difficulty. She can say "nothing" of the soul because, according to the assumptions of white spiritualism, it has no social substance or historical texture. The soul that stands impervious to discussion memorializes the disappearance of history that attends the spiritual. Her simultaneously invoked and uninvoked soul serves as a figure of history, ambivalently marking the not there, the forgotten, and the veiled as the very real stuff that predates history.

Without this recuperation, the soul, interiority, autonomy, and other mainstays of democratic identity readily assume a postpolitical status. In the contact between politics and the occult, citizens tend to misrecognize democracy as a purely psychological aspiration best

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deferred for some future day. The so-called black arts discovered by Poyen, then practiced in séances and other manifestations of spiritualism, and finally reevaluated by Jacobs engage a pedagogy that recalls the preconditions and attributes of citizenship that once had political life before they were pronounced safely dead and postpolitical. Materialist in scope and democratic in operation, this pedagogy is a reminder that transparency, disembodiment, and other privileges are unequally distributed in U.S. democracy.



De-Naturalizing

Citizenship

After four chapters of digging up politically dead bodies, this final chapter may seem to provide a breath of fresh air, as it were, by looking at the post–Civil War rebirth of citizenship. The Fourteenth Amendment, in part, legislated this birth by guaranteeing life, liberty, and property to persons once classed among the socially dead. A nationalist script holds out regenerative possibilities. The formal creation of citizens via constitutional amendment offers sharp alternatives to what appear as comparatively informal and depoliticizing operations of a diffused culture of necrophilia. Neither the abolitionist fascination with deathly freedom nor phobic attention to white male sexuality nor erotic binding to sleepwalkers and clairvoyants achieve anything like the official status of constitutional pronouncement.¹

But formal solutions are no protection against the potentially lethal effects of U.S. democracy. Indeed, a formal legal definition of citizenship forces an experience of national belonging that annihilates history, especially histories woven around embodiment, public dialogue, and ancestry. As legal scholars have asked, "Whose histories and memories 'count' in law . . . [and] what does law do to history?"² The creation of citizenship can destroy other forms of political life, the revitalization of citizenship along federal lines remains visited by specters of depoliticization. Haunted by social death, citizenship as the precept for equal membership also serves as an architect of inequality.

A breath of fresh air may be little more than the suspiration of ghosts. For a nation that triumphed over slavery, these ghosts are socially dead persons and forgotten memories that have been disconnected from the newly born bodies of national citizens.

Geographies Other Than the National

With the citizen sheltered by the home's moral influence, the ideal context to nurture the obligations and responsibilities of political life is the domestic sphere. Such is the advice Frances E. W. Harper offered in an address titled "Enlightened Motherhood" that she delivered to the Brooklyn Literary Society in 1892, the year her novel *Iola Leroy* was published. A maternal story of the Civil War and its aftermath, Harper's historical fiction of radical Reconstruction argues that in contrast to the evasive resistance of slaves, emancipated subjects need to exercise newly granted civil rights in a forthright manner amid open discussion. It thus seems uncharacteristic that Harper in "Enlightened Motherhood" retreats from the public arena, here seen as profane and factional, and lodges her hopes for "an emancipated people . . . on the threshold of a new era" snugly on domestic doorsteps:

The school may instruct and the church may teach, but the home is an institution older than the church and antedates school, and that is the place where children should be trained for useful citizenship on earth and a hope of holy companionship in heaven.³

Her conception of republican motherhood builds on what might be designated as a posthumanist recognition that free subjects are framed and formed by ideological state apparatuses. Anticipating Louis Althusser's claim that institutions of civil society—including church, schools, and family—reproduce the "ideology of the ruling class," Harper touts domestic relations as most effective in suturing moral cohesion for the social regime.⁴ But unlike Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," which does not include gender as a regulatory apparatus, Harper's "Enlightened Motherhood" perceives that political and social institutions operate along psychological pathways already imprinted by codes of masculinity and femininity. Correcting for "politicians" who "stumble on the barren mountain of fretful controversy" and "men" who "drink from the unsolved problems of the hour," women administer a palliative social influence by fostering continuity and stability.⁵

Except that while the home as an apparatus may be ideological, in Harper's thinking it is hardly an ideological state apparatus. The "useful citizenship" she invokes ultimately hovers above political power "on earth," its final destination a spiritual elevation surpassing human institutions. Although today one might view askance a citizenship whose end seems the apotheosis of "holy" disconnection, this late-nineteenth-century vision of millennial citizenship intervenes in masculinist politics by first rejecting that realm as fruitless and then searching for an alternative. Still, questions about the wisdom of this rejection arise: Why theorize an alternative citizenship when formal national citizenship seems the first order of business for the disenfranchised? Can African Americans afford the theoretical luxury of alternative citizenship when they lack the fundamental rights and basic protections of federal legal status? Imagining allegiance to something other than the masculinist state seems a miscalculation in light of the fact that blacks had long sought normative political membership as well as the privileges and immunities that (supposedly) went along with it. Black activists bitterly complained of a government, as Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Taney had interpreted the matter in Dred Scott (1857), that was not bound to respect their rights. Against the legacy of Taney's ruling that descendants of Africans never had been and never were considered citizens, Harper's fantasy seems tripped up by its dubious evasion of juridical reality.

By the time of "Enlightened Motherhood" and *Iola Leroy*, however, the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) hypothetically had overturned the import of the *Dred Scott* decision by defining a national citizenship that trumped any restrictions imposed by the states. What sort of commentary, then, is Harper making in "Enlightened Motherhood" on the desirability of formal citizenship? Does the political fantasy of alternative citizenship suffer from a failure to consider the political reality that makes a standard of national citizenship necessary in the first place? Or, is Harper declaring her indifference to — or at least, her dissatisfaction with — normative political membership when she locates citizenship in nonnational, perhaps even cosmopolitan, spaces of a vague earth and an even vaguer heaven? Her argument at this

juncture recapitulates a point she made in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* in 1857, the year of *Dred Scott:* "The law of liberty is the law of God, and is antecedent to all human legislation."⁶ Faced with Taney's formal dispossession of blacks, Harper resituates political life in an eternal zone outside of national geography and chronology. The urge to locate the subject beyond the space and time of the nation-state reveals less about the consistency of Harper's protests over her forty-year career as an abolitionist and social activist and more about an "America" that consistently refused to modify in substantive ways its thoughts on black citizenship.

Debates over the position of African Americans with respect to a nation-state that once enslaved them were not resolved with the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, which spelled out the parameters of U.S. citizenship. Not only did a series of legal decisions culminating in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) vitiate rights and protections that the Four-teenth Amendment had formally granted: in addition to the uncertainty over and erosion of African American civic status, the prospect of national citizenship for blacks had long presented a range of questions—philosophical, ethical, psychological, and political—that make Harper's critique in "Enlightened Motherhood" anything but singular or shortsighted. Although imagining a citizenship uncolonized by U.S. imperatives may seem a naive rejection of real advances blacks made in the postwar years, Harper's nonnational fantasy represents a theoretical attempt to contest the uncontested and "natural" ground of citizenship.

Geographies other than the national have been the historical subject of African American political desire. But besides the millennial parameters of late-nineteenth-century black republican motherhood as imagined by Harper, what are the contours of an alternative citizenship? If citizenship has locations other than the state and imaginaries other than the nation, does that citizenship necessarily transcend and exist *above* the nation? Or, can nonnational citizenship function *below* bureaucratic levels of the state in everyday subterranean incrustations that withstand interpellation? Does the relocation of citizenship to a different geography productively disrupt static identities conferred by the state, as Lauren Berlant suggests in her idea of "a *counter*pornography of citizenship" to imply how intimate sexual knowledge often obstructs the impersonal effects of state power on

citizens' bodies?⁷ Or, in a fourth option, are there forms of political identity that run *alongside* legal status, providing an allegorical supplement to more officially recognized ways of talking about citizenship? The domestic scenes and bourgeois virtues of post-Reconstruction novels by African American women, Claudia Tate asserts, provide just such an alternative by relocating the rights of citizenship to contexts framed by rites of love and marriage.8 Harper's *Iola Leroy* (a text I will examine more closely in the latter half of this chapter) attempts to embody these alternative locations in a range of characters, but despite the richness inherent in such possibilities, the novel also theorizes a notion of citizenship that reconstructs the relation of the subject to the nation-state in ways that generate new hierarchies and exclusions. Even though uneducated freedpeople, white Union officers, black soldiers, the African American intelligentsia, and a nontragic mulatta all renegotiate their positions to nation and state in Harper's novel, the book's final page includes a note that tabulates these characters as persons who "add their quota of good citizenship to the best welfare of the nation."9 The reappearance of the nation as the telos of citizenship should give one pause by darkly hinting that efforts to revise and reimagine citizenship inevitably may be subsumed under the moral logic of the United States.

The question is not where does an alternative to national citizenship lead. For alternative forms of political identity often find themselves back in the same place by reiterating inequality and reinforcing amnesia. *Iola Leroy*, for instance, imagines a counterpublic that shadows a national public yet this new collectivity only repeats exclusion, limiting participation not in terms of race, as Taney did, but on the basis of class, caste, and educational status. Hence the question is citizenship itself, which signals inclusion for some by generating exclusion for others. The birth of political personhood often necessitates the death of corporeal, ancestral, and other nonnational bodies.

Neither outright rejection of citizenship nor illusory hopes for an informal standard of belonging (any system still demands forms at some level) are the solution here. Even at its most extreme, the critique of citizenship does not wind up suggesting that radical democracy entails the literal death of the category of citizen. Rather, the task (which is not a solution) is to recognize citizenship as an erasure of both a

subject's and a people's history, memory, and contingency—and to reintroduce such repressed material to narratives of political identity. Radical democracy more than gives access to all citizens: it also recuperates putatively nonpolitical scraps of subjectivity and community that were cut away to reveal the citizen in the first place.

The Fourteenth Amendment and the Reduction of Subjectivity

Above, below, counter to, and alongside: these locations of citizenship mark crucial though often untaken paths in a recuperative project to examine the types of agency that remain viable in opposition to legalistic categories of state-authorized political identity. Yet I do not want to get ahead of myself: the contention that U.S. citizenship forecloses alternative positionalities should not ignore the specific historical reasons that made birthright membership in the nation-state, as laid out by the Fourteenth Amendment, a welcome realization of freedom for African Americans.

Lincoln's proclamation effectively freed no one by emancipating only those slaves residing in areas not controlled by Union military forces. Despite the landmark status often accorded to Lincoln's famous field order, the Emancipation Proclamation "spoke in muffled tones that heralded not the dawn of universal liberty but the compromised and piecemeal arrival of an undefined freedom," writes historian Ira Berlin.¹⁰ While the Thirteenth Amendment ended "involuntary servitude," its language did not work positively either to define freedom or protect the ambiguous status of people who had been without rights. Yes, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, passed over Andrew Johnson's presidential veto, stipulated that blacks could make contracts, bring suit, own property, and generally enjoy rights "as is enjoyed by white citizens," but the adoption of regressive state laws easily circumvented such promises of federal protection.¹¹ Enactment of the Black Codes-statutes devised in the defeated Confederacy that among other curtailments, compelled freedpersons to labor or suffer incarceration for violation of vagrancy laws - made all too clear to radical Republicans the need for a constitutional amendment protect-

ing the newly emancipated. To counteract discriminatory state legislation, Congress moved against the precedent of *Dred Scott* by extending national citizenship to the descendants of Africans.

National incorporation of former slaves in this climate hardly seems a repressive gesture; rather, it was an appropriate federal response to a civil war that did not achieve victory on all fronts. An irony of the Thirteenth Amendment that ended slavery without saying anything about freedom comes in a clause stating that "involuntary servitude" shall not exist "except as a punishment for a crime" — a clause that describes exactly how the Black Codes created black criminal behavior to strip freedpersons of liberty and property. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 sought to counteract the practical reinstallation of slavery evident not only in the Black Codes but also in the use of labor contracts, many of which stipulated that former slaves address landowners as "master."¹² Against this persistence of antebellum practice in postbellum reality, federal codification of black political status as a guarantee of protection is clearly desirable. National identity-despite a stodginess and inflexibility that emerges in comparison to alternative (above, below, counter to, alongside) geographies of citizenship — safeguards the dispossessed, especially those who in a previous era had been dispossessed by the state at the center of that national identity.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866, however, proved largely ineffective because its operation remained bound to a juridical history that had been stopped in 1857 by Dred Scott. Ruling that the investiture of citizenship lay with the states and not the federal government, the Supreme Court in a series of decisions from the 1870s to 1890s hamstrung congressional measures designed to incorporate blacks. Radical Republicans viewed the South's circumvention of African American rights via the Black Codes as part of a constitutional inadequacy that permitted state statutes to take precedence over national legislation. As the congressional Committee on Reconstruction saw matters, the Constitution contained a "defect" that while limiting the power of the federal government in creating "unjust" laws, said nothing about prohibiting discriminatory action taken by the states.¹³ The Black Codes allowed states to dodge federal provisions for African American civil rights. Hence the necessity of additional constitutional amendments. It was not enough to spell out negative liberty as the Thirteenth Amendment did in guaranteeing freedom from involuntary servitude. Positive lib-

erty as the freedom to belong to the nation-state, receive equal protection, and participate in its political rituals (such as voting) remained undefined and unrealized. The Fourteenth Amendment responded to this need (questions of franchise were left to the Fifteenth Amendment), in effect, by nationalizing rights and consolidating a specifically U.S. identity that overrode restrictions specified by the laws of individual states. As Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan Jr. wrote in a centennial assessment of the Fourteenth Amendment, its promulgation of a formally expansive political status constitutes a "landmark of legal liberty" dispersed across the geography of citizenship: "It has touched the life of every American by nationalizing the fundamental constitutional standards in the federal Bill of Rights."14 Viewing power as an intimate relation between nation and citizen, Brennan admires the sheer, unabridgeable power of the amendment to caress "every American." Impersonal governmental behavior-suspect for a tendency to meddle, interfere, and overregulate-is here anthropomorphized, even humanized, by its sensory knowledge of the populace.

But in addition to this catachrestic portrayal of constitutional power as a physical body endowed with the capacity to touch, Brennan's language pivots on another, equally crucial slippage, one that suggests the need for a critical interrogation of citizenship even as the historical and symbolic significance that national incorporation had for blacks both during and after Reconstruction is acknowledged. The Fourteenth Amendment, according to Brennan's phrasing, legislates the conflation of the national and federal: rights once guaranteed by state apparatuses shed their institutional cocoon and emerge full-blown with a luminous political power entwined about every calculable entity of democracy. As the federal metamorphoses into the national, the sublime is put into political high gear: exalted to expansive dimensions, rights become universal enough to touch each infinitesimal unit of the body politic. Steered by the injunction that civil rights apply to "all persons," politics becomes individualized and personal. The lofty pretensions of federal oversight ensure that the personal never jars with the national because the personal here is at core generic and homogeneous 15

Conflation and misidentification of the governmental state as the spirit of the nation does not originate in Brennan's overview, how-

ever. An interpreter of the law, he follows established precedents that first appear in the catachrestic threads of citizenship woven into the Fourteenth Amendment. Consider the amendment's first sentence: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Citizenship falls under the purview of the United States, not the separate states as Taney ruled back in Dred Scott, and is *nationalized* because it is already *naturalized*. This conception of citizenship mandates a bland historical identity as the outcome, inevitable and gestational, of a natural course of events. "All persons" want national citizenship because the history of other civic desires, such as the heavenly images in Harper's "Enlightened Motherhood," seems both excessive and artificial when placed against the normative background of state apparatuses. Experiences of political membership that transcend, dive below, counter, or mimic the nation only have importance in light of the particularities and memories that reveal formal legal status as an impoverishment of subjectivity. But citizenship naturalizes this history to function as ideology. Forged out of a constructed category of the natural, citizenship, like ideology, sidesteps history. I purposely blur meanings of naturalization as a legal process of incorporation and an amnesiac operation of ideology in order to signal that the identity of citizen disavows conflictual and antagonistic processes that frame political being. As a natural identity, the citizen discards the scraps and heterogeneous leftovers that do not fit the pattern of legal personhood. What constitutional historians call "post-Appomattox formalism" brings forth the citizen from the body of the historically alive and materially situated subject.¹⁶ Predicated on the exclusion of everything that predates the contract of the U.S. nationstate and subject, citizenship works, as does ideology, to dehistoricize historical conditions as a timeless process much like birth.¹⁷ What citizenship dehistoricizes are the historical conditions of its own articulation, conditions laden with memories of alternative geographies and temporalities for political being. As a naturalizing and nationalizing operation, citizenship makes inevitable the subject's allegiance to a formal identity guaranteed by the nation-state.

The Fourteenth Amendment represents a radical innovation in governance as the moment when "the federal government claimed the exclusive allegiance of its citizens, in return for its commitment to

protect their fundamental rights."18 But as political membership becomes "exclusive," what gets excluded? What aspects of subjectivity memory, desire, regret-are remaindered by a government's claim on its citizens? With the nation conceived of as a natural and unavoidable destination for the democratic subject-that is, with citizenship articulated as unhistorical result and postpolitical process — other topographies of political identity become harder to imagine. Speculations about non-, sub-, or counternational citizenship are blocked by the Fourteenth Amendment, which overloads particularistic, often temporary and perhaps idiosyncratic, political identities that flicker in the history of the U.S. nation-state. As a strictly legal entity, the citizen is born from the plenitude of historically complex, culturally textured, and materially specific subjects. This political birth, then, occasions the death of a subject who experienced political desires other than those clustered around the state. Ironically, these leftover identities, so trivial and unrealized in comparison to the national one, often find expression in the thinking of African Americans, the very people whose uncertain status initially prompted the amendment.

Violence: this for Slavoj Žižek is the effect of psychopolitical operations that translate subject into citizen. Intuiting an uncanny kinship between the "subject of democracy" and the "subject of psychoanalysis," Žižek pinpoints a process of abstraction that evacuates texture and desire from the subject, leaving only a generic shell in place of "a human person, 'man' in all the richness of his needs, interests, and beliefs."19 Abstraction, he maintains, is a "violent act" perpetrated by the language of "every democratic proclamation," under which can be included the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment. The compulsive force of "all" in the phrase "All persons born and naturalized," in conjunction with the nonexclusionary qualification that rights shall not be abridged "because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude," as one early draft of the amendment stated, annihilates in a single liberal stroke the distinctive features that impede a generic political identity.²⁰ Not uncoincidentally, this language that prohibits both federal and state governments from discriminating against persons on account of corporeal histories comes from Robert Dale Owen, a U.S. congressman who before drafting a version of the Fourteenth Amendment, authored a spiritualist work titled Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World (1859). His description of clairvoyant

mediums "emancipated from earthly trammels" anticipates his proposal to nationalize ex-slaves: legalistic phrasing and psychospiritual discourse (a distant cousin of Žižek's psychoanalysis) converge in a contempt for lives made contingent by sociohistorical materiality.²¹ Such deadened citizens, however blissful the terms of their incorporation, bear witness to the ontological violence performed by the language of citizenship.

Depictions of citizenship as an abstraction of violent proportions, though, can minimize the less metaphysical and more brutal history of race riots, white vigilante terror, and lynchings that freedpeople suffered. Even though the Fourteenth Amendment, especially after the Supreme Court crippled its ability to protect African American civil rights, did not discourage violence against blacks, ignoring the positive significance that formal legal status had for former slaves seems dangerously glib. Interrogation of citizenship as a repressive ideological state apparatus allows an essential theoretical and political investigation, yet it is also an investigation that threatens to become untenable if the theoretical overshadows the specificity of the political.²² In his reading of United States v. Wong Kim Ark, an 1898 Supreme Court case that recognized U.S.-born Chinese as citizens, Brook Thomas expresses this concern as he takes issue with critics who, influenced by cultural studies and postmarxist analysis, deconstruct citizenship as a regulatory tool of the state. Citizenship, writes Thomas, is a positive functioning of the law: "To demystify the notion of citizenship is to risk losing as a possible political weapon a concept that imagines selffulfillment through commitment to the public good."²³ It is important to consider Thomas's caution that the deeply embedded history of citizenship not be overlooked. But nor should critics be browbeaten by history and shy away from excavating the foundational premises that authorize and legitimate political subjectivity. Bonnie Honig and Judith Butler, for instance, contend that exempting any foundational entity-such as the citizen or "free" subject-from analysis leads to a problematic inattention to the contestations and fissures that scar the imperfect ground of what seems like perfected politics. This critical position does not insist "that there is no foundation, but rather, that wherever there is one, there will also be a foundering, a contestation." 24 Appreciation of the judicial review that declared Wong Kim Ark "a natural-born citizen" constitutes a signal insight into the value

of citizenship, but this insight should not close down investigations of the ideological work of naturalization that makes political identity a fact of nature, not a question of history. By denaturalizing citizenship and attending to the history that formal legal status excludes, we can recuperate ghosts and other socially dead persons deemed to have no bearing on a process of incorporation that seems as natural as being born. Discarded and remaindered, these materials not encompassed by the single self "born" as state subject allude to diasporic heritage, collective affiliations, and embodied memories.

"A French Grammar" and the Remainders of Diaspora

Diaspora, fugitive corporeality, and intimate associations are the hardto-read landmarks of alternative geographies of citizenship. Imagining nonnational landscapes—locations of political identity performed above, below, counter to, or alongside — is an activity that too often remains unthought. Although naturalization dehistoricizes the subject and makes his or her relation to the state unremarkable, the debates over incorporation and expatriation among African American intellectuals and writers can enliven a contemporary sense of citizenship now grown static and ordinary. In her study of emancipation marred by continued unfreedom, Saidiya Hartman poses key questions about the stakes of African American citizenship: "Is an emancipatory figuration of blackness possible? Or are we to hope that the entitlements of whiteness will be democratized?" ²⁵ Her questions suggest the underlying dilemma that arises with the almost simultaneous granting and suppression of black political rights under Reconstruction: What is the color of the abstracted black citizen? Color here is not mere pigmentation, a complexity evidenced by the "whiteness" of black heroines like Harper's Iola Leroy. Instead, color signifies in opposition to the blankness of formal citizenship by marking the incongruity of African residues in the U.S. state. In probing this incongruity, some black commentators hoped that civic entitlements would wash over the discordance of Africa and America while others wondered if it was at all possible to retain cultural distinctiveness in the wake of state interpellation. I turn to a slice of this debate as a means of illuminating the national precepts that render citizenship natural.

A brief exchange conducted in the final days of the Civil War shows that for many blacks, U.S. national identity was hardly natural, but rather a vexed historical category that demanded scrutiny and circumspection. Less than a month before General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appottamox, Reverend James Lynch in the Christian Recorder, an organ of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, advocated that blacks in the United States renounce all cultural ties to Africa. So strong were his feelings that he called for "the word African" to "be stricken" from the name of the church itself: "We are not Africans," he firmly stated. He built his antidiasporic case by appealing to a narrow lexicon, rejecting the word African for what he viewed as its implicit acceptance of a second-class status. As Lynch elaborated, "The word 'African' . . . suggests the idea of the formation of all persons of African descent into a separate nationality and is a tacit recognition of the prejudice of whites." Remembering Africa tokens acquiescence to a status quo that stigmatizes blacks as culturally different, and therefore, in Lynch's reasoning, socially inferior and politically inept. A more progressive course, he implies, consists in the pursuit of complete incorporation into the U.S. nation-state. Since "the color of skin, as an issue in this nation is fast passing away," Negroes can hope for a sameness that will domesticate their presence as unobjectionable, even ordinary.²⁶ In turn, objections to the color (as a metonym for ancient memories, psychological residues, and family histories) of the abstracted black citizen become nonissues as well.

Two weeks later, the *Christian Recorder* published a response to Lynch that backed off from the rejection of *African* and instead saw the adjective as a positive reminder of an indelible legacy. In a critique of Lynch's wholesale immersion in the nation-state, George A. Rue reasoned, "If being born in Africa makes a man [*sic*] an African, then we are not Africans; but no matter where the place of our birth, we are still the descendents of Africans, and, of course, belong to that race."²⁷ Birth is too isolated an event for the foundation of the citizen's biography. Rue approaches a subjectivity that might be defined as cultural citizenship, which unlike birthright membership, is grounded in complex geographies of memory, descent, and psychology. Cultural citizenship, in marked contrast to the enslaved bodies of blacks themselves, is nonalienable and remains deeply saturated with histories of Africa. Unofficial and nonlegal, such citizenship refuses the natural-

ization of federal citizenship as decreed by the Fourteenth Amendment by establishing the cultural foundation of the subject as, in fact, prior to the subject. Cultural citizenship refuses the spatiotemporal coordinates of naturalized belonging; the allusiveness and richness of this identity does not comfortably fit generic patterns of national incorporation. Stretching back beyond one's always historically recent birth, identity encompasses more than self. Cultural citizenship orbits around a sphere far larger than the nation-state to touch on genealogies of a people caught in diaspora for generations.

This cultural thinking disregards the ideological effects of legal citizenship that construe naturalization to be as natural as birth. Yet through the operation of the Fourteenth Amendment, this birth spells death for cultural residues that precede federal personhood. To return to the arguments of Butler and Honig, Rue de-establishes the citizen to expose instead a contingent subject whose identity results from competing histories and conflicting traditions. In terms of chronology, however, Rue's commentary itself precedes the proposal of the Fourteenth Amendment by a year and its 1868 ratification by a full three years. Once naturalization and citizenship were sutured together by constitutional mandate, the *Christian Recorder* explicitly rejected any diasporic connotations of a cultural citizenship:

In the American Negro the best type of his [*sic*] race [is] extant. Just as we regard the Whites of America as possessing the noblest traits—traits which are to constitute them the leaders of their race, so is it with the Blacks. The Negroes of the Spanish West Indies and Brazilian America, those of the latter who are still slaves, may be regarded as the lowest of our race on the American continent. The majority of them were doubtless born in Africa, and they have never thrown off its barbaric usages.... As we come to write of Hayti, we feel sad.... The Haytian Negroes are a noble race, and their record is one of which the world will yet be proud. Yet they lack those elements of order, of cool deliberation, of submission to authority, that are ever demanded in a good government. The American Negro, unlike his brethren, has been the pupil of the cool, aspiring, all-conquering Saxon, and in no little measure he has partaken of all the greatness of his master.²⁸

Eager to demonstrate that recently freed slaves were not about to construe liberty as license, this editorial squarely locates the nation's

newest citizens in traditions of self-governance and sober productivity. The identification of "American Negro[es]" as a distinct line of the "Negro . . . race" steadfastly abides by the nation's borders and even participates in the postbellum logic that justifies imperial expansion of those borders. In attenuating connections to Africa, this article effectively scales back the overreaching temporal consciousness sketched by Rue. While each of these pieces in the Christian Recorder documents the existence of nonnational territories of memory and resistance, this latter editorial invokes black diaspora only to reject that history as threateningly un-American and hence "barbaric." As this editorial, appropriately titled "The American Negro," seeks to reassure Reconstruction publics that freedpeople will exercise liberty with restraint, it retracts hemispheric consciousness to the confines of a racialized respect for "Saxon" America. Insofar as the Christian Recorder here in 1868 shared Rue's earlier perspective that "we are still descendents of Africans," it did so with reluctance. "The American Negro" directs readers to the safe ground of a truncated past, one disconnected from previous generations that had struggled to preserve African culture in the Americas. The historiography here is the same as that underpinning the Fourteenth Amendment, which begins and stops at the thin biography of a singular formal state subject. Not uncoincidentally, "The American Negro" appeared only four months after the first sentence of the Fourteenth Amendment, beginning with "All persons born or naturalized . . . are citizens," became the law of the land.

The diasporic lure of cultural citizenship hardly seemed practical or worthwhile to those seeking tutelage from the "all-conquering Saxon." In the famous debate between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois over the virtue and value of higher education, the two leaders sparred at one point over the nonnational limits of the African American political archive. While Washington pronounces the sight of a young man reading a French grammar book as "one of the saddest things I saw," Du Bois imagines this scene more optimistically. Washington experiences the same emotion as the anonymous author of "The American Negro," who writes how "we feel sad" considering Haiti because its history of diasporic violence casts a gloom over the bright prospects of national allegiance. But in a trenchant critique, Du Bois indicts the narrow ethic of capitalist industriousness that leads Washington to deem "the picture of a lone black boy poring over a

French grammar amid the weeds and dirt of a neglected home" as "the acme of absurdities."²⁹ Though each writer formulated more direct and sustained commentaries on black citizenship, this brief exchange helpfully condenses the argument rehearsed in the *Christian Recorder* thirty years earlier. The specific bone of contention—"a French grammar"—echoes with political significance: knowledge of the French language prepares engagement with a worldview that spans a history of black resistance from the Haitian Revolution to nascent anticolonial movements of francophone Africa in Du Bois's day. Without this memory and awareness, the "lone black boy" would be truly alone. Yet the almost inconsequential nature of this global gesture reveals the scant possibilities for nonnational identification ever since Reconstruction, when the African American political subject, as a naturalized entity, was exhausted by national citizenship.³⁰

Privacy, Concubines, and Iola Leroy

While Du Bois's refusal to share Washington's skepticism about the utility of a French grammar meshes comfortably with his later emphasis on pan-Africanism, this incipient hint of diasporic identification clashes with his historiography of black freedom as a national drama. As with Harper's "Enlightened Motherhood," Du Bois construes citizenship as a question of gender—and in his case, the issue is expressly masculine. His analysis does not rest in the security of the domestic but instead pursues entry into the public sphere, a task that Du Bois undertakes with a vengeance. In the minds of dominant society, as Du Bois sees it, only military bravery could transform chattel into men worthy of civil and political rights:

When he ["the Negro"] rose and fought and killed, the whole nation with one voice proclaimed him a man and a brother. Nothing else made emancipation possible in the United States. Nothing else made Negro citizenship conceivable, but the record of the Negro soldier as a fighter.

Where Žižek identifies violence as an effect of an inclusion underwritten by democratic abstraction, Du Bois posits a different violence, more vivid and confrontational, as a necessary precondition of black incorporation. The violence that for Žižek produces metaphysical dis-

ruption, becomes thoroughly physical in Du Bois's hands in *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935). His excavation of citizenship, like Friedrich Nietzsche's genealogy of morals, returns to origins stained by bloodshed; respect for equal rights for all men derives from the killing of some men by others: "The slave killed white men; and behold, he was a man!" ³¹ Masculinity, especially its violent demonstration, makes a powerful case for incorporation. To kill is to act nationally: under the fratricidal conditions of the Civil War, what Du Bois calls murder serves as a pledge of allegiance. Citizenship in these circumstances wholly concerns the interiority of the relation between subject and state, leaving no room for the centrifugal pull of nonnational cultural consciousness. Bayonets and rifles issued by the Union army overshadow a French grammar.

In "Enlightened Motherhood," as we have seen, Harper encourages a domestic conception of citizenship because she saw with bitter disappointment how masculinist claims for inclusion and equal rights were systematically disregarded and overturned. In her 1877 novel, Trial and Triumph, which appeared serially in the same publication that provided a forum for debates about African American citizenship, the Christian Recorder, Harper critically reworked ideals of national belonging by recalibrating the Fourteenth Amendment's language of naturalization and birth. Mr. Thomas, a self-made man, complains in the novel that racial discrimination inhibits his ability to act as an independent laboring self: "I like to feel as an American citizen that whatever concerns the nation concerns me. But I feel that this prejudice against my race compresses my soul, narrows my political horizon and makes me feel that I am an alien in the land of my birth." ³² The comfortable symmetry between state and citizen breaks down as belonging decays into alienation. Being born in the United States cripples African Americans like Mr. Thomas with limited social and economic opportunities - and this debility effectively denies him the entitlements and protections that make political membership worthwhile. Prejudice burdens him with a knowledge that denaturalizes his citizenship, exposing its theory of privileges and immunities as hollow in practice. His subjectivity no longer collapses into the nation; the language of the Fourteenth Amendment that makes citizenship a truncated historical experience of being "born or naturalized" is revised by a depressingly more complete history of the actual,

everyday treatment of racial bodies. As formal birthright membership jars against Harper's literary reconstruction of citizenship, a paradox emerges: to be born a citizen is to become an "alien."

Examination of state versus diasporic identity in the Christian Recorder, even in conjunction with the sliver of debate between Washington and Du Bois, by no means represents a full overview of the history, in a strict disciplinary sense, that stands behind *Iola Leroy* and its critical allegory of citizenship. Nor does this grouping of texts ranging from the final days of the war in 1865 to the publication of Up from Slavery (1901) and The Souls of Black Folk (1903) claim to map comprehensively African American citizenship along a trajectory of evolution, development, and setback. Instead, I offer these readings as a cluster of ascendant as well as overlooked patterns of thought and discourse in order to frame a reading of Harper's novel as a theoretical intervention in questions of citizenship. This approach avoids setting up literature as an effect of history and it also resists an interpretation that asks history-again, in its academic disciplinary sense-to serve as a handmaiden to "deeper" understandings of literature. What it does enable, in contrast, is strategic deployment of Harper's historical fiction as neither history nor literature but as an instance of cultural critique that draws on several different discursive patterns since ossified into disciplines. This cluster outlines the ground for the naturalization of national citizenship; as a critical reconstruction of postbellum discourses, however, Iola Leroy denaturalizes unquestioned political identity by imagining plural and antagonistic relations between subject, citizen, and nation-state. Around the story of a tragic mulatta, Harper gathers a series of discourses - sentimental and legal, feminist and patriarchal, and public and private-that disintegrate the formal coherent identity of citizen.

In its story of a young woman searching for belonging and incorporation, *Iola Leroy* serves as an allegory of citizenship. But the acceptance she hopes to find comes at the hands of kin and community, not the state. It is this critical difference that makes Harper's novel not just an allegory but an allegorical critique of a formal citizenship created by the Fourteenth Amendment. The interpellation of African Americans into a national narrative is played out in the commodified, sexually harassed, and formerly enslaved body of Iola Leroy. Surveying the emancipated body of a heroine once traded as a "fancy girl," a

Union general of liberal sympathies experiences a pang of uncertainty about *his* political identity:

Could it be possible that this young and beautiful girl had been a chattel, with no power to protect herself from the highest insults that lawless brutality could inflict upon innocent and defenseless womanhood? Could he ever again glory in his American citizenship, when any white man, no matter how coarse, cruel, or brutal, could buy or sell her for the basest purposes? (31)

Whereas black masculinity displayed in the war, according to Du Bois, constitutes an aggressive claim for inclusion, white masculinity here adulterates political virtue by exercising its power as unprincipled sexual tyranny. In coming to this recognition, the Union commander occupies the same structural position as fugitive slave Henry Bibb, who as we saw in chapter I, reads his wife's gender as an impediment to *his* freedom. Iola's womanhood is tied to masculine citizenship insofar as her womanhood becomes a sexual target, the passive surface on which white entitlement is enacted and positioned against.

Iola, though, is hardly passive and barely a citizen. Citizenship is not something she can claim in the abstract public sphere but rather is something claimed (and reified) in her abjected body sold to satisfy private desire. The general's outrage at men's articulation of citizenship on women's bodies seems overdetermined, a hyperbolic protest to disavow erotic titillation provoked by his thought of an unprotected "white" woman.³³ His contempt for "American citizenship" sublates his indelicate interest in Iola's tragic mulatta story: this congruence marks the sexualization of national entitlement and the revamping of public privilege as private enjoyment. Yet, as Claudia Tate notes, readers should be wary of evaluating retreats into bourgeois intimacy as a complacent abandonment of the quest for African American civic rights and political advancement. Privacy and sexuality function as allegorical sites where "the civil conflict of social equality is narrated symbolically." 34 But via Iola's sexualization and its perpetuation in the shocked sensibilities of Union men who shudder to imagine such scenes, the novel only reproduces the circumstances of invalid marriage and actual concubinage that beset Iola's mother. Such speculation-whether as the traffic in women or the general's liberal reflections-poses a problem for American citizenship by paralleling

the formal relationship between legal person and nation-state to the nonbinding arrangement of concubinage. The sexual privatization of national narrative, embodied by Iola's brief experiences as a "white" slave woman, delegitimizes citizenship by making it not only abusive but also "unnatural." Just as Henry Bibb accuses his wife of violating "the law of God and man" once she becomes her master's concubine, so too the Union general charges that American citizenship loses its purity once it creates the brutal potential of legally allowing "any white man" to practice, even by threat of force, miscegenation.

The general's interest in Iola, an interest he fears as overly private and prurient, is repeated in a later scene when yet another white man, Dr. Gresham, is alternately fascinated and outraged by the mulatta's tragic history. Although this army surgeon manifests a romantic interest in Iola that outpaces the general's, Gresham attempts to take a higher, more sublimated road by nationalizing, not privatizing, his desire. Iola strikes him as fresh terrain for the rehabilitation of a national narrative from the incoherence of the Civil War:

The fierce clashing of war had not taken all the romance out of his nature. In Iola he saw realized his ideal of the woman whom he was willing to marry. A woman, tender, strong, and courageous, and rescued only by the strong arm of his Government from a fate worse than death. (46)

Unlike the general who reads in Iola the corruption of citizenship, the doctor takes her as an allegorical body that receives the healing power of a federal balm. This is one way, the doctor's way, to read this passage.

But in a suspicious reading that pauses at the catachrestic attribution of a "strong arm" to the institutional body politic, Gresham's attraction for Iola reveals itself as a protective screen for his anguished attachment to a wounded citizenship little different from the general's sullied political identity. The government's strong arm supplies the place of the actual arm Gresham lost earlier in the war. The trauma of his "armless sleeve" (109) is healed by the nation's prosthetic corporeality. As he thinks of a sexually harassed "white" woman who cannot escape the legal fact of her "black" body, Gresham himself becomes disembodied as a subject. Speculation about her at-risk body engenders a compensatory fantasy in which the nation-state sublimates his physical body's lost virility as the body politic's paternal-

ism. As Michael Warner explains, despite its abstraction, the "public subject does have a body, because the public prosthetic body takes abuse for the private citizen." ³⁵ This surrogate relation between body and body politic reiterates the lethal logic of prosthesis that shelters white men from political injury by forcing "others" to suffer the consequences. National feeling, in effect, rescues wounded bodies by privatizing women and slaves. Even as the nation symbolically restores Gresham's amputated limb, conferring the safeguard of abstraction, it invasively privatizes Iola, not as political subject or even nonsubject but as the subject of rape. The doctor's attraction, therefore, depends on the same allegorical conjunction as the general's: each man pits his impermeable governmental body against the susceptible body of the mulatta in sadistic fantasies of a "defenseless" woman alternately terrorized and saved by white male citizenship.³⁶ Gresham takes pleasure in imagining "a fate worse than death" because the thought of her defiled womanhood displaces his own penetrability and confirms his freedom. His necrophilic repulsion/longing for inviolable, disembodied citizenship brutally privatizes Iola as a sexual victim.

It is not simply Iola's beauty that makes the general and doctor uncomfortable. These men fidget because they no longer can rely on a complex of repression that underwrites allegiance to the U.S. nationstate. Fascination with the tragic mulatta exposes their investment in the "sexual contract" that organizes fraternal alliances by stigmatizing women, relegating them to private spheres.³⁷ The fine print of the social contract (as also a sexual and racial contract) becomes much larger in Iola Leroy because Harper's allegory of national citizenship returns obsessively to black women. Consent to a contract with either husband or state, as the general's and doctor's leers imply, is always a sexual and racial matter. While this "always-already" status might excuse liberals like Gresham from any intentional wrongdoing as passive beneficiaries of a time-honored social fiction, he and the general both are excited to play active, intimate roles in this fiction. They do not merely understand their privilege against women's lack of privilege; they also experience a certain thrill in Iola's subjection. The sensuousness of citizenship's power that Iola negatively embodies brushes up against the abstract principles of their (white male) liberal disembodiment. Excited by the friction as the racial and sexual subject meets up with a generic state identity, public enfranchisement and private dispossession, privilege and constraint, citizenship and marriage all collapse into one another. Distinctions between the social contract as "a story of freedom" and the sexual contract as "a story of subjection" no longer apply.³⁸ As erotic investments in Iola's civic body imply, these stories are one and the same.

Privatization in these allegorical instances endangers citizenship because extramarital relations disregard the legal, formal underwriting of contractual identity that one bears to the patriarchal locus of either state or husband. Unofficial sexual arrangements ruled the day under slavery as private (that is, privately owned) bodies enjoyed none of the protections spelled out in the first eight amendments to the Constitution. With emancipation, former slaves sought to validate their freed status by wrapping injured aspects of their lives around civil institutions, especially marriage. As historian Leon Litwack observes, "No sooner had emancipation been acknowledged than thousands of 'married' couples, with the encouragement of black preachers and northern white missionaries, hastened to secure their marital vows. both legally and spiritually." By legitimating the marriage contract joining husband and wife, freedpeople hoped to establish foundations that would allow them to "legitimize their children, to qualify for soldiers' pensions, to share in the rumored forthcoming division of the lands, and to exercise their newly won civil rights." 39 This history explains why marriage — as a relation whose privacy receives legal immunity so vividly allegorizes citizenship. Where intimacy is guaranteed by the state, privatization confirms citizenship by situating everyday roles and personal rituals against a backdrop of national protection. This transaction of desire that cathects persons to the state shows how in post-Reconstruction black women's domestic novels, the "black marriage story" functions "as a liberational discourse." And in the specific case of *Iola Leroy*, the heroine's decision to reject a white suitor, a union that uncannily would repeat her mother's invalid marriage to a white plantation owner, illustrates "the convictions of exemplary black citizenship." 40

Yet equating marriage and citizenship in this manner ignores how Harper's allegory fails to align exactly domestic arrangements and political status in mounting a critique of ideological state identity. By design, *Iola Leroy* weaves an imperfect allegory in which the lack of correspondence between the mulatta's cultural memory and citizen's

ahistoricity discloses that belonging to the nation-state is not always desirable. Iola refuses her white suitor not to dedicate herself to "exemplary black citizenship" but to withstand the allegorical logic of nation that obsessively reads and usurps her private body as a matter of state. This position does not commit her to uphold privacy at all costs, for as the remainder of the novel shows, Iola values her role as a public intellectual devoted to the uplift of lower-class black populations.⁴¹ Her oppositional stance, then, is not a defense of domesticity as a separate sphere but rather a challenge to the national style of allegory that simultaneously abstracts and reduces persons by making them citizens. She finds Gresham's wooing unappealing precisely because it is allegorical, collapsing the Fourteenth Amendment's promises of inclusion into the promises of a lover's discourse. To meet her objection that "an insurmountable barrier" forever makes their union impossible, the doctor tells Iola, "I love you for your own sake. And with this the disadvantages of birth have nothing to do" (88). His love-struck proclamation echoes the state's recognition of the citizen: following the Fourteenth Amendment's truncating logic of "all persons born," Gresham's recognition of Iola divorces her from histories antecedent to her own birth. His words owe more to federal formulas than to the language of courtship; the spell of romance he seeks to throw over Iola is not so much heteronormative as hetero-national. What he says is natural—in the sense that it is unmarked as national discourse. He loves her as the United States loves its citizens, "for [her] own sake," and to the exclusion of legacies and ancestors that preexist the citizen's biography. In Iola's case, the "disadvantages of birth" overlooked by Gresham and the histories not recognized by the nation are one and the same-namely, African American remainders, perhaps no more visible than Iola's fraction of "black" blood, that identify the human subject as excessive to and more complex than the citizen. Wife and citizen each "enjoy" a single primary relationship to patriarchal authority, either husband or state, but for Iola this prospective tie is only one among many preexisting affiliations.

As Gresham courts a woman once sold as erotic merchandise, a national-allegorical debate ensues in which her private declaration of sentiments segues into a public reckoning of the prospects for blacks as a whole. Encouraging her to truncate her identity, Gresham's plea hinges on a state logic, one aptly deployed by the Fourteenth Amend-

ment, that extracts the citizen from more complexly entailed notions of the subject. Iola refuses to become the wife of a white man who seeks to prevent, were such an operation possible, her African history from manifesting itself in the complexion of their prospective children. She repudiates his social/sexual contract because she senses how bourgeois citizenship trims back the fullness of "communal existence," as Marx describes:

In order to behave as an *actual citizen of the state*, and to attain political significance and effectiveness, he [*sic*] must step out of his civil reality, disregard it, and withdraw from this whole organisation into his individuality; for the sole existence of which he finds for his citizenship of the state is his sheer, blank *individuality*. . . . His existence as a citizen of the state is an existence outside his *communal* existence and is therefore purely *individual.*⁴²

She doesn't mind Gresham as an individual but does find unattractive his plan to make her purely individual. The actual citizen, allegorically rendered as wife, forfeits all connection to legacies of dispossession. According to the logic of interpellation, Iola can enter into a contract with a husband or state only for her "own sake" - Marx's barren image of "blank individuality"-but not as a slave mother's daughter. Gresham thus has no response when Iola asks him to imagine his feelings should their hypothetical child "show unmistakable signs of color" (90). To entertain this fantasy/nightmare is to remember oppressive white power and violated black bodies that exceed a "naturally" abbreviated history centered on an autonomous legal subject. Iola, in short, doesn't mind Gresham personally-she makes this clear in an effort to spare his feelings-yet she does object to him *im*personally as a prosthetic figure who asks her to "disregard" history and experiences remaindered by a contractual relationship with patriarchy, either embodied as husband or disembodied as nation-state.

Violence, Privacy, and the Supreme Court

While an imperfect allegory, Harper's melodrama of incorporation as a prospective marriage to a white man is not an asymmetrical condensation of politics into a domestic relationship. The easy interchange-

ability between public and private spheres depends on the contractual aspect of each union: the subject consents to naturalization much as the female partner to conjugal union rewrites her identity in accordance with patriarchal law.⁴³ At least this is how postbellum interpreters of U.S. citizenship construed the intimate relation of the individual to the state. A decade after *Iola Leroy's* publication, Supreme Court Justice David Brewer delivered a series of lectures at Yale University titled *American Citizenship* (1902), and suggested that his auditors could best understand their natural, already-agreed-to obligations to the state by thinking of the contract formed "when man and woman enter into the marriage relation."⁴⁴

This line of reasoning, its privatizing consequences never in doubt, would continue to play a significant role in judicial review, culminating in the 1965 Supreme Court decision Griswold v. Connecticut. The Court here went beyond Iola Leroy's ambivalent parallel of marriage and citizenship in its affirmation of the Fourteenth Amendment as not merely an impersonal reflection of a conjugal contract but as itself a guarantee of marital privacy. At issue in Griswold was a Connecticut law making it illegal to provide or use contraception. In his opinion that this law improperly allowed a state to regulate the lives of federally recognized citizens, Justice Arthur Goldberg held that "Connecticut's birth-control law unconstitutionally intrudes upon the right of marital privacy" in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.⁴⁵ Goldberg found unconvincing the state's brief that men and women enjoy more perfect civic lives when marriage and conception are subject to state regulation. However much, as Connecticut's argument went, it is "in accordance with the experience of all mankind [sic] that human beings are happier and are better citizens and better disposed toward the State, when married and surrounded by the ties of a family and with children," the Supreme Court's ruling implied that citizens instead would be more content with equal protection to rights of privacy in the face of state intrusions.46

How content should Iola be with Gresham's promise of marital privacy to the effect that a national history of black abasement need not—indeed, should not—intrude on their marriage? Plenty, according to the generally positive evaluation of *Griswold* and privacy by some commentators.⁴⁷ Yet a less optimistic take emerges if the federally guaranteed rights of privacy are read *back* through *Iola Leroy*. By

foregrounding Iola's body and the threat of rape, Harper's novel reveals that privacy procures contentment for white men. Privacy is a patriarchal entitlement-and not just for the Southern planters who trafficked in women. For Gresham, who hears in Iola's story of being "sold from State to State as an article of merchandise" a story of her temptation, privacy promises him the privilege of keeping her concubinage safely confined to the marital bedroom (88). As Iola insists, however, her sexual history is also national history; the private use white men would make of her body originates in the entitlements of citizenship. In The Tempting of America, Robert Bork sorely skews the question at stake in Griswold to assert that "the right [of privacy] does not come out of the Constitution but is forced into it." ⁴⁸ Privacy here figures as the unjust penetration of U.S. foundations by liberal formulas. In Bork's sensational phrasing, the national body is somehow perceived as vulnerable to a privacy that has historically benefited white male citizens. Bork's image of a violated Constitution, as though its integrity had been compromised by the concept of privacy, dodges the deeper question of how it is the masculine state — and not its reluctant subjects like Iola-that benefits from privacy.

Privacy is thus a privilege of full citizenship deployed against those who claim only partial citizenship. In fact, men accused of marital rape have invoked *Griswold's* right of marital privacy as a courtroom defense. While this legal maneuver has not convinced the courts, privacy has sanctioned an experience of national citizenship that in intimate and domestic settings, looks the other way at violence against women. As legal theorist Elizabeth Schneider writes in her essay, "The Violence of Privacy,"

The concept of freedom from state intrusion into the marital bedroom takes on a different meaning when it is violence that goes on in the marital bedroom. The concept of marital privacy, established as a constitutional principle in *Griswold*, historically has been the key ideological rationale for state refusal to intervene to protect battered women within ongoing intimate relationships. . . . [C] oncepts of privacy permit, encourage, and reinforce violence against women.⁴⁹

Distinct from Žižek's critique of democratic abstraction and Du Bois's celebration of black soldiering, both of which identify different types of violence at the origins of formal political subjectivity, Schneider's

"violence of privacy" suggests instead how rights are used by some citizens—with the state's inadvertent blessing—against others. In light of privacy's underside, is Gresham's proposal of marriage markedly different from slave owners' threats of rape? While it may be answered that Gresham is too much a gentleman to force himself on Iola, he has no qualms about forcing his history on her. In her union with him, he assumes she will adopt New England domesticity and forget the Leroy family history of mésalliance and miscegenation.

Looking forward a few years from the Court's take on contraception in Griswold, one glimpses the staggering social implications this ruling would have in legitimating the concept of privacy at the heart of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion. Looking backward to the scene of Harper's novel, one sees another important set of issues also involving marriage, citizenship, and privacy. It is this last term privacy-that Griswold unveils as a sticking point in Iola's decision not to accept a husband/state as the ultimate arbiter of her identity. She does not want a fully entitled suitor-citizen to exercise the concept of privacy over her. The right to marital privacy claimed by Gresham in his effort to alienate Iola from any competing claims of family, community, or heritage is a calculated juridico-domestic appeal that patterns a wife/citizen with no edges or folds to her subjectivity not covered by patriarchal governance. Privatization restricts citizenship to the static harmony of the conjugal as exemplified by Gresham's desire that Iola consent "to sharing my Northern home, [to] having my mother to be your mother" (89). As with national incorporation, Gresham would have his identity overlap completely with Iola's, and any memories that exist outside that overlap, such as devotion to a lost slave mother, are overwritten by a new set of affiliations. Citizenship, like Gresham's vision of marriage as connubial amnesia, trims back the past; the "right to marital privacy" in its retrospective operation becomes an injunction to enshroud the citizen in a national logic of privatization that leaves her shorn of subaltern registers of cultural belonging.

As a matter of total overlap, marriage between a private person and state seemed the perfection of political subjectivity to Supreme Court Justice Brewer. His turn-of-the-twentieth-century lectures updated and democratized monarchical metaphors to celebrate national citizenship: in a New World version of Louis XIV's dictum,

"Every American can say, 'The Nation! I am the Nation." 50 Brewer's geography of citizenship is monumental, its map of consolidated federal power oblivious to particularistic remainders of subjectivity. And according to one legal historian writing in 1912, the bureaucratic technology that accomplished this "new paternalism" was mobilized by the Fourteenth Amendment. Lamenting the postbellum demise of states' rights that, in his opinion, had worsened "the Afro-Teutonic situation," this commentator employed the same language that Justice Brennan would use in 1965 to speak of an amendment that "nationalize[d]" rights by panoptically bringing every person under a governmental gaze.⁵¹ But what's not as obvious is that the subject's diminution accompanies federal expansion, that privatization corresponds to nationalization. This double movement of personal contraction and impersonal dilation that gives birth to citizenship is, for Chantal Mouffe, part of a larger history of liberalism that "reduced citizenship to a mere legal status." 52 As opposed to Brook Thomas's contention that cultural critics too readily dismiss positive aspects of national citizenship, Mouffe points to the importance of broader interrogations of political identity. Yet where does the conflict between Thomas's emphasis on the virtues of formal citizenship and Mouffe's rather mournful description of a subject attenuated to a thin legal entity leave someone like Iola Leroy?

Between restrictive marriage and exploitative concubinage: such are the only available options offered by white men to Iola and her mother. On the one hand, marriage as an allegory for formal citizenship protects Iola from abuse even as it represses her maternal history that legitimates abuse in the first place. She is both sheltered from and denied a family sexual history that is coincident with darker episodes of U.S. national and legal history. On the other hand, to decline the "mere legal status" of wife/citizen is to court the indignities of adulterous sexual traffic. Life without citizenship becomes analogous to the late-nineteenth-century heroine's choice to reject Victorian morality and forgo the sanctity of wedlock: scandal and harassment threaten the subject who tries to exist independently of the patriarchal guarantees offered by either a husband or state. In her work on this treacherous landscape where the conjugal performs the political, Claudia Tate reconsiders "the social value invested in marriage as a sign of meritorious citizenship." 53 Iola's story ends happily because she inherits

a different fate than her mother and avoids becoming a white man's wife/concubine, instead wedding a suitor of African American ancestry. Bourgeois rituals both secure and symbolize national incorporation. Freedpeople's pursuit of a social agenda patterned after white Victorian decorum suggests to political theorist Judith Shklar "how very mainstream American the ideology and aspirations of the exslaves were." What the freedpeople desired, she concludes, "was to be citizens like everyone else."⁵⁴

But Iola does not want to be a citizen like any other; indeed, it is questionable if she wants to be a national citizen at all. The push to homogeneity violates the specific materiality (and maternality) of memory that Iola cherishes. She does not want the same mother as Gresham despite his liberal offer to share his white heritage to the exclusion of her African American one. Iola instead searches for an alternative geography of citizenship that remaps the relationship between subject and nation with more nuance than the starkness of existing either completely within or wholly outside the nation. Her theory of citizenship utilizes a grammar that signals neither inclusion nor exclusion. As she explains to Gresham,

I cannot be your wife. When the war is over I intend to search the country for my mother. . . . I have resolved never to marry until I have found my mother. The hope of finding her has colored all my life since I regained my freedom. (90)

Her refusal establishes nation or "country" as incidental to "mother"; the United States is simply the geopolitical territory for her cultural quest. Neither outside the nation nor wholly interpellated by it, Iola travels its actual and imaginary terrain in hopes of existing beside "America," taking a course that, at times, intersects with federal routes of identity and, at others, veers off to backtrack across personal and collective tracts of memory and belonging. In contrast to a generic identity, she insists on a "colored" experience organized around a re-union with a specific maternal history.⁵⁵ This narrative, in its repudiation of abstraction, functions in an antiallegorical mode: Iola's search for her mother remains actual and does not refer beyond itself to provide a surface for national reflection.

Her mission does not rule out marriage and incorporation but defers consent to the unstated time when her lost mother will be restored.

Only after Iola locates her mother does her relation to the nationstate become resolutely antiallegorical as she refuses Gresham for the final time. Equating marriage to a white man with a type of race treason, Iola interprets the habitus of her body-her refinement, gifts, and gentility—as the direct, unmediated, nonsymbolic result of black servitude. In response to Gresham's plea that she not marry for her race, she states, "It was . . . through their [former slaves'] unrequited toil that I was educated, while they were compelled to live in ignorance. I am indebted to them for the power I have to serve them" (176). Her subjectivity is an undeniable racial product that refuses abstraction under an allegorical mode of national imagining. Her social life comprehends social death. Iola recognizes that her privilege depends on notions of antecedence that acknowledge the material conditions of "unrequited toil" in ways that the federal execution of Reconstruction, which failed to redistribute lands that generations of slaves had cleared and cultivated, did not.

Iola has not always thought this way. As a schoolgirl who erroneously believed herself to be legally white, Iola at first construed the materiality of blackness as illusion. She dreamed about "the joyous greetings of the servants and Mammy Liza's glad welcome as she folded her to her heart," only to awake and find that this embrace was in actuality the rude groping of the unscrupulous agent who remands her to slavery (80). Disrupted by the prerogatives of white male citizenship exercised on black womanhood, her fantasy attempted to domesticate the intrusion of unwelcome sexual knowledge by returning to romantic fictions of the plantation. In her final rejection of Gresham, Iola once more mentally revisits her father's plantation, yet this time her version of home entertains no illusions about the forgotten labor of contented "servants." She offers an explicit accounting of the oppressive conditions of black slavery that converted her whiteness into a precious commodity for men of the master class. Unlike the truncating ideology of citizenship, this excavation of her own status adduces a prehistory of cultural entitlement.

Her call to unearth the past follows on an impassioned argument in Harper's earlier novel, *Trial and Triumph*, to remember "antenatal history." Only with an awareness of maternal history, Harper implies, can sons and daughters live in the present with dignity. It is precisely this antenatal history that the Fourteenth Amendment excludes by recog-

nizing only events subsequent to the citizen's birth or naturalization. In *Trial and Triumph*, the illegitimate history preceding the heroine's birth makes no reference to the material conditions of race and is instead a privatized history of a morally casual woman whose "lack of self-control had caused her to trail the robes of her womanhood in the dust." ⁵⁶ In *Iola Leroy*, however, the prehistory of the heroine's social origins does not so much provide insight into the private recesses of identity as it illuminates material conditions repressed by her incorporation into national patriarchal regimes. Citizenship in Harper's reinterpretation no longer develops allegorically from birth to national future; rather, it beats a backward course to people and ghosts that never became part of that future.

Frances Harper and the Problem of Dual Citizenship

As she recuperates the lost material of the past, Iola skews the temporal axis of citizenship so that it becomes complicated by a history, which predates the citizen herself.⁵⁷ Her search represents but one effort in her case, a reverse chronology that derails the future-oriented direction of allegory to resist total identification between subject and state. An equally important intervention in the ideology of political membership appears in the tactics of *Iola Leroy's* John Andrews, who as a freedman goes by the name of Salters. He does not conceive of an alternative temporality as Iola does but instead articulates an alternative persona that exceeds state identity to expose the thinness of federal personhood as an imperfect replica of the richly historical human actor. In the disjunction between Andrews and Salters, the incommensurability between formal legal subject and nonnational identity comes into focus. Significantly, he explains his intervention in nonstandard English:

All de use I'se got fer dat name [Andrews] is ter git my money wid it; an' wen dat's done, all's done. Got 'nuff ob my ole Master in slave times, widout wearin' his name in freedom. Wen I got done wid him, I got done wid his name. Wen I 'listed, I war John Andrews; and wen I gets my pension, I'se John Andrews; but now Salters is my name, an' I likes it better. (126)

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This jettisoning of a preemancipation identity fits with the testimony of ex-slaves who took new names with the advent of freedom. Adopting a new name or recuperating an old one disallowed by a master was often a deeply meaningful act that marked the transition from bondage to liberty. "The names assumed or revealed after emancipation reflected a new beginning - an essential step toward achieving the self-respect, the personal dignity, and the independence which slavery had compromised," observes Leon Litwack.⁵⁸ For Salters, dissociation from his slave name spells out more than a freed subjectivity. His remarks also pack a counternational critique. His self-refashioning cannot be described as a break with the past; in fact, he takes care to preserve his former slave name, employing it as a prosthetic buffer that absorbs the potential injury of trafficking in a governmental economy. He specifies that he operates as Andrews only when he seeks his army pension, only when he has a financial relation to the nation. Andrews thus safeguards Salters from monetary transactions, a type of interaction that can commodify and alienate the self, as he most certainly can remember. Manhood, as Du Bois argues in Black Reconstruction, may have been powerfully realized in the freedmen's heroism on the battlefield, but for the former slave to receive greenbacks in payment for the services of that manhood seems an uncanny echo of the (de)valuation of black personhood under slavery. Salters corrects those who, through force of habit, refer to him by his slave and soldier name: "Salters, ef you please. . . . I'se only Andrews wen I gets my money" (128). Folksy yet insistent, his reminder stages a critique that betrays the nation's coincidence with a capitalist logic that deprecates black manhood precisely by valuing it. Similar to Iola's commentary on the unpaid labor of her race, Salter's use of Andrews as a strategic decoy points to the continued exploitation of blacks after emancipation. It is an injury for which the nation can provide no adequate compensation.

In the space where Salters and Andrews do not overlap, a surplus identity evades state interpellation. Salters's doubleness gives lie to Justice Brewer's maxim in *American Citizenship* that what "is true of the individual is also true of the nation" by never interfacing directly with its administrative state apparatus.⁵⁹ This ploy, in effect, takes Salters out of circulation, reserving a more fragile identity for life among the other ex-slaves who have carved out homesteads on their former mas-

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ter's plantation. Salters/Andrews's strategic deployment of personae in the face of the federal government is not simply a novelistic moment that contemporary critics can latch onto and celebrate as a temporarily subversive nonnational identity, however. Far from being thoroughly oppositional, this ambivalent conjunction of identities is instead a toxic aftereffect of the juridical scuttling of the Fourteenth Amendment during and after Reconstruction.

In the Slaughter-House Cases (1873), the Supreme Court handed down an opinion that, like Salters/Andrews, appealed to two levels of citizenship. But for the Court, recognition of a level of citizenship distinct from the national colluded with its abandonment of African American rights. The majority on the bench, represented by Justice Samuel Miller's opinion, would have found Salters/Andrews's ambivalent nonoverlapping twoness perfectly intelligible: "It is quite clear, then, that there is a citizenship of the United States, and a citizenship of a State, which are distinct from each other, and which depend upon different characteristics or circumstances in the individual."60 Competing notions of political membership, not in their ludic possibilities but in their repressive actuality, would have been familiar precedent to the justices ever since Dred Scott denied the slave's claim to freedom by deeming him only a local citizen. Though Scott contended that residence in a free state had rendered him free, Taney reasoned that when the plaintiff returned to Missouri, state jurisdiction reasserted itself and he reverted to the status of property.⁶¹ Much as the Missouri-identified property of Scott differs from citizen Scott presumably freed by national power, Salters, as a local citizen distinct from the federally recognized Andrews, inhabits a nonnational space that is hardly liberatory. Dred Scott rehearses the Slaughter-House Cases: under the pre-Civil War logic still influencing the Court in 1873, the Fourteenth Amendment recognized two distinct spheres of citizenship, state and national, leaving blacks at the mercy of state laws that mandated second-class status. The national government could safeguard only the federal rights of citizens, which by definition were limited and few in number. As Brook Thomas sums up the impact of the Slaughter-House Cases, "What the Fourteenth Amendment forbade, Miller argued, was simply state infringement on the privileges and immunities of United States citizenship, which, he implied were narrow in scope."62

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Salters/Andrews lives according to a judicial logic that vitiates the amendment's egalitarian promise; his coy sequencing of national and nonnational identities is, quite possibly, not so coy but rather a miscalculation that upholds the very sort of nonnational claim used by the states in the adoption of Jim Crow. The "duality of citizenship," as one legal historian depicted the fallout from the Supreme Court's interpretation, frees the subject from national regulation even as it dubiously frees him or her from federal protection.⁶³ Once the Court declared that national and state citizenship were not simultaneous, much as Salters proclaims that he is not coextensive with Andrews, the logic of nonnational citizenship also upheld the regressive tactics of state legislatures committed to the memory of an antiquated social order. The abandonment of Reconstruction in 1877 graphically signaled this revocation of judicial protection for blacks that had begun with the bench's theory of the dual geographies of citizenship.

In her portrait of Salters/Andrews, Harper is not alone in skipping over the potentially repressive effects of a political subjectivity loosened from the nation. Contemporary critics such as James Holston and Arjun Appadurai adopt a sanguine air in their prospectus of "new forms of overlapping citizenships" no longer tied to the nation and instead articulated in relation to the global culture that appears in cities.⁶⁴ Cultural anthropologist Aihwa Ong appreciates the allure of such new formations, which she styles as "flexible citizenship," but she also does not lose sight of the fact that identities, no matter how mobile, never escape operations and discourses of the nation-state.⁶⁵ Similarly, Partha Chatterjee writes that critics (and here he makes specific reference to Holston and Appadurai) quick to "move beyond the nation," may actually underestimate the possibilities for carving out a progressively democratic sphere from within the nation.⁶⁶ In thus highlighting the pitfalls of Salters/Andrews's ambivalently dual and flexible identity, it may appear that I am coming around to Thomas's position that formal citizenship, as exemplified by his reading of Wong Kim Ark, functions positively. Salters's tricksterlike indifference to federal power, from this vantage, does seem a naive abandonment of a nationally incorporated status. But a state-recognized legal identity is not the sole remaining option.

The Promise of the Counterpublic . . . and the Return of Hierarchy

Though Salters never develops his theory beyond vernacular quaintness in the overall schema of *Iola Leroy*, the novel experiments more fully with an alternative citizenship that runs alongside and mimics the national public sphere. Harper's representation of an African American counterpublic sphere, a space where black men and women participate in democratic rituals unavailable to them in the national public sphere, cuts across and broadens the formal axis of state identity.

Disconnected from a strict relation to the state, members of this alternative geography are free to enter and contribute to a collective discourse not constellated about "America." At the home of Mr. Stillman, a name that recalls William Still who operated a key stop on the Underground Railroad, black intellectuals in Iola Leroy now openly gather to debate African American social progress and uplift.⁶⁷ This conversazione, as Harper calls it in a flourish of bourgeois pretentiousness, serves a popular pedagogy by engendering an exchange of progressive views and reformist ideas that make *Iola Leroy* read like "a textbook for the educated black person in the crisis of disenfranchisement, lynching, and the Jim Crow laws." 68 Iola participates as a rightful member of this political community in ways she never could in the U.S. state, and not only because of her race. I accept a certain dissonance in my discussion of Iola as both an allegorical and actual citizen in light of the fact that women did not acquire the right to vote until 1920. In the conversazione, however, Iola engages in activities perhaps as meaningful as voting by debating and helping to set policy on issues ranging from colonization to moral uplift.

Just as none of the guests at the Stillman house are asked to forget racial heritage per the dictates of naturalization/nationalization as articulated in the Fourteenth Amendment, neither is Iola required to transcend her gender in order to take part in a democratic exchange about living on the color line. She speaks on "The Education of Mothers," an address whose title recalls Harper's "Enlightened Motherhood" discussed at the outset of this chapter. Although the novel does not reproduce the text of Iola's speech, from the question-

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and-answer session that follows, it can be inferred that she has focused on republican motherhood much as Harper did when she addressed the Brooklyn Literary Society in 1892, the year *Iola Leroy* was published. Harper's activities as a public intellectual fold into the novel's portrayal of a black public sphere. The convergence of melodrama and public address reveals that the Stillman home—and more generally, black domesticity—is not a separate sphere devoted to the sentimental privatization of citizenship so clearly at work in Gresham's offer to Iola to share his "Northern home."⁶⁹ Infused with respect for the political valence of the maternal, the black domestic sphere instead sustains a more intimate counterpublic that challenges the impersonal abstraction of the national.

But this reconstruction of citizenship also invites relapses of hierarchy and exclusion. The black bourgeois counterpublic is, at times, as falsely democratic as formal state citizenship itself. Geographies other than the national lose emancipatory potential once these spaces are organized around narratives of citizenship. Whether the terrain is the federal body or domestic sphere, membership hinges on an ethic of inclusiveness that sets up standards of acceptability as conditions for inclusion in the first place. The counterpublic sphere in Iola Leroy includes a variety of blacks (men and women, Northern professionals and Southern refugees, and liberals and conservatives) who nonetheless scrupulously adhere to Victorian protocols of primness and respectability. Civic- and religious-minded black women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham notes, fashioned a public sphere that debated the best strategies to withstand racist practices and attitudes. This liberatory consciousness, however, was not without complication as adherents to an ideology of racial uplift-such as the educated, proper, and grammatical women at the conversazione-also propagated a "bourgeois vision that vacillated between an attack on the failure of America to live up to its liberal ideals of equality and justice and an attack on the values and lifestyles of those blacks who transgressed white middleclass propriety."⁷⁰ In these contexts, citizenship enacts a second death ritual that seeks to estrange subjects from specific (and in this case, nonbourgeois) elements of life.

Although Iola's comments in the Stillman parlor stake a position of sublime nationalism, the geography of African American citizenship is

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very much under debate. The conversazione has an antiphonal structure conducive to democratic contestation: to take an example from the debate that characterizes this black public sphere, one participant's injunction "Go to Africa" is met with the interrogative response "Go to Africa?" (185). This episodic forum, even though it leads to the dismissal of Afrocentric ideas, nonetheless entertains various modifications of citizenship: evangelical, diasporic, national, and bourgeois. The conversazione temporarily rehabilitates citizenships bulldozed by federal incorporation. These different locations demand a chronology that does not adhere to the timeline ordained by the Fourteenth Amendment. For this gathering of "earnest men and women deeply interested in the welfare of the race," citizenship does not originate out of the relatively short history of birth that severs the subject from the past (such as Africa) that is under debate (185). As Miss Delaney, a black moral reformer invited to the roundtable, emphasizes, a naturalized state identity represses a prehistory of biblical proportion: "I would have our people . . . more interested in politics. Instead of forgetting the past, I would have them hold in everlasting remembrance our great deliverance" (188). And on the walk home after the African American intellectual forum, Iola's mother and uncle implement this memory. In commenting on the nicely bourgeois parlor and furnishings of the Stillman home, a decor that symbolizes the material and spiritual progress blacks have made since slavery, Uncle Robert transitions to the past:

When I sat in those well-lighted, beautifully-furnished rooms, I was thinking of the meetings we used to have in bygone days. How we used to go by stealth into lonely woods and gloomy swamps, to tell of our hopes and fears, sorrows and trials. (196)

Robert's inclusion in the conversazione and its community (a questionable inclusion, as we'll see in a moment) recalls memories that predate the black public sphere where the intelligentsia read poems, debate social questions, advocate racial uplift—in short, where its members enact their citizenship. Like his niece, Iola, who balances the "unrequited toil" of previous generations of slaves against her own entitlement as "free"/freed woman, Robert juxtaposes this open community to the furtive meetings of the past. The contrast proves instructive not only in adhering to Miss Delaney's admonition about

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amnesia but also in cultivating the future growth of the counterpublic sphere. From memories of "gloomy swamps," he generates hope for future meetings devoted to the candid discussion of race matters as a hallmark of alternative citizenship. He concludes with a plan to materialize this democratic desire: "I hope that we will have many more of these gatherings. Let us have the next one here" (196).

That the Leroy household will host the next conversazione is dubious, however. Harper takes care to mention that only "a select company" participates, and given that Iola's grandmother left at home uses "dis" and "dat," it seems unlikely that the black public will next materialize in a sphere that is not thoroughly bourgeois. The counterpublic sphere preserves some familiar hierarchies. Though Robert intends to open up his family's house for the forum, the select company has not enthusiastically incorporated him into its discussion. He contributes nothing to the conversation and offers his remarks only after the meeting has adjourned, as Carla Peterson observes in her critique of the novel's evasion of postwar capitalism's unwelcome reception of black workers. Robert is a citizen who does not participate; his ideas do not find a larger democratic forum. In terms of Robert's entry into the black public sphere, his badge of incorporation tokens neither privilege nor responsibility but "marginalization and silence," which as Peterson contends, "underscore the poverty of debate over the place of African-Americans in the national political economy of postbellum America."71

Meanwhile, there has been no shortage of debate about *Iola Leroy* among contemporary critics, some reading the novel as proletarian resistance to white cultural imperialism, others reading it as accommodationist mimicry of hegemonic values.⁷² While Iola's mulatta whiteness can signal either radicalism or conservatism, her ambivalence to citizenship has created little critical debate. For Claudia Tate, as we have seen, the work of the post-Reconstruction black women's domestic novel in nurturing citizenship is what saves books like *Iola Leroy* from appearing as saccharine melodramas of tidy convention. The novel's agenda to recognize African Americans as "full citizens," according to another critic, amounts to a pointed challenge to latenineteenth-century scientific racism.⁷³ Lauren Berlant complicates this celebration of "full" immersion in the U.S. governmental system by arguing that Harper rejects this identity in favor of "a truly African-

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American centered *American* citizenship."⁷⁴ Her reading touches on the novel's several black spheres, not just the conversazione, by describing the fugitive apparitions of community appearing under the slave regime. Implicit in this stress on incorporation is the idea of citizenship as an egalitarian prospect that gathers together and dignifies marginalized subjects, according them position and power. But citizenship also engineers inequality and exclusion, and the black public sphere featured in *Iola Leroy* is a prime example of a democratic collectivity whose gestures of inclusion leave some members by the wayside.

Because this African American intellectual forum offers alternatives to the governmental sphere of national life, it more appropriately can be termed a "subaltern counterpublic," to use Nancy Fraser's language. Rather than romanticize such oppositional formations, Fraser voices a note of theoretical despair about alternative political geographies: "Some of them, alas, are explicitly antidemocratic and antiegalitarian; and even those with democratic and egalitarian intentions are not always above practicing their own modes of informal exclusion and marginalization."75 Elsewhere, in an essay coauthored with Linda Gordon, Fraser identifies the exclusionary aspect of the counterpublic sphere-Harper's "select company of earnest men and women"-as an unavoidable effect of citizenship. Drawing on T. H. Marshall's Citizenship and Social Class (1946), Gordon and Fraser articulate the paradox of "actually existing democracy" where citizenship acts as an architect of inequality.⁷⁶ Pushed to the edges of the intellectual circle, Uncle Robert and Iola's mother suffer the effects of this paradox that incorporates a public so as to disincorporate others. The democracy that empowers citizens to hold civil rights in common and treat one another as equals also authorizes these same citizens to participate in an unequal distribution of social resources. For Marshall, this skewing of equality to uphold hierarchy is principally an economic relation: capitalist forces that establish "civil rights [as] indispensable to a competitive market economy" abet some citizens to unequally apportion property, education, and justice.⁷⁷ While *Iola Leroy's* examination of race and race relations demands a reworking of Marshall's purely economic analysis, the outcome of disempowerment and alienation remains the same for former slaves on the margins of Harper's black public sphere. Included due to democratic pledges to racial equality, Uncle Robert and Iola's mother are practically excluded because of the counterpublic's narrow privileging of Victorian respectability and professional status.

It is not simply the conversazione that legitimates citizenship as the architect of inequality, however. The novel itself also bars the "folk" from sharing social resources. To assert that the fictional project of Iola Leroy colludes in the antidemocratic effects of democratic citizenship seems at first a difficult argument to broach in light of Harper's careful dramatization of rural freedpeople in the postbellum era. The novel's antiphonal structure that alternates between scenes of uneducated "folk" and scenes of socially advantaged ministers and doctors produces a kaleidoscopic vision. Elizabeth Ammons writes that this broadly representative agenda makes use of several literary forms in an effort "to reach toward a new form." 78 The novel's subtle yet immitigable marginalization of older, lower-class blacks unveils this "new form" as an all-too-familiar exclusion, however. Flush with the optimism of first freedom, ex-slave Aunt Linda voices a desire for literacy so that she may learn the Bible and join a Christian community. But as the novel unfolds, Aunt Linda's folkways and devotion to nonbourgeois behaviors (such as her weakness for homemade wine) and vernacular speech (for example, her use of the word *nigger*) discredit her as hopelessly backward, forever unfit for African American citizenship, no matter its geography, alternative or not. By the book's final pages, her dispossession is complete:

"Oh, yer can't fit dat book froo my head, no way you fix it. I know nuff to git to hebben, and dats all I wants to know." Aunt Linda was kind and obliging, but there was one place where she drew the line, and that was at learning to read. (208)

In abandoning her literacy project, Aunt Linda forsakes earthly politics for the millennial hope of spiritual citizenship in "hebben." Forget about becoming a citizen in the state or black counterpublic, the novel tells her. This amnesiac injunction depends on a narratival inconsistency that allows Harper to disremember Aunt Linda's earlier yearning for literacy.⁷⁹

Scaling back what citizenship means to someone like Aunt Linda may be an oblique strategy of documenting the erosion of African American civil rights. This reduction may also signal acknowledgment

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of the black public sphere's exclusionary practices that "came to displace a broader vision of uplift as group struggle for citizenship and material advancement," as Kevin Gaines observes.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, it also marks how Harper's narrative-like citizenship-acts as an architect of social inequality. Her narrator reproduces elitism and justifies dispossession of the freedpeople in a revealing episode from an earlier novel, Minnie's Sacrifice (1869). Addressing a former slave as "Mr. Jackson," Harper's protagonist adapts his speech to an era of freedom to act "in deference to [the freedman's] feelings" by "dropp[ing] the 'aunt' and 'uncle' of bygone days." ⁸¹ The narrator, in contrast, displays no such "deference" and continues to refer to "Mr. Jackson" as "Uncle Richard." "Bygone days" never quite fade away, keeping the exercise of new citizenship dependent on old forms and customs. Though far from wishing a return to anything that even remotely resembles slavery, postwar narrative, as exemplified by Harper's Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction novels, not unlike legal fictions of the Supreme Court, tell a story of citizenship that seems comfortable with hierarchy and inequality in the present.

Miscegenation without Sex

Yet in keeping with Harper's antiphonal strategies, *Minnie's Sacrifice* also counteracts the narrator's condescension by treating freedpeople with dignity. The novel's heroine considers uneducated folk who do not find full acceptance in the black public sphere as the truest practitioners of U.S. national citizenship. In language that the narrator of *Iola Leroy* would repeat almost verbatim, Minnie says of the newly emancipated, "They knew how to be true to their country, when their masters were false to it, and rallied around the flag, when they were trampling it under foot, and riddling it with bullets."⁸² Harper intensified this victorious parade of national imagery in *Iola Leroy* with extended rhapsodies to Union military might.⁸³ The post-Reconstruction black women's novel dabbles in martial valor, gesturing, as Du Bois does explicitly, to an arena where blacks successfully demonstrated the loyalty required of citizens.

Except that the body of the black citizen does not figure prominently in the nationalist reprise. Harper's narrator turns to spiritual

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transactions to enmesh African Americans in U.S. political, moral, and cultural life. At a time when fears about black bodies mixing with the white population fueled both legal measures outlawing interracial marriage and extralegal measures like lynching, *Iola Leroy* astutely withholds the body from view. Incorporation here is impossible without its opposite—dis-corporation.⁸⁴ African Americans enter conversations about U.S. destiny only when they enter without substance and make no demands to occupy space or reach after the tactility of power. Dr. Gresham expresses this ghostly racial presence in a speech that dis-corporates African Americans:

The negro came here from the heathenism of African; but the young colonies could not take into their early civilization a stream of barbaric blood without being affected by its influence, and the negro, poor and despised as he [*sic*] is, has laid his hands on our Southern civilization and helped mould its character. (163)

Although "the negro" here seems physical enough, embodied with the rituals of Africa, "he" dematerializes as an abstract racial type that is then folded into an ethnology of national culture. Mixing occurs at the level of the nation, not the body. What Gresham envisions is miscegenation without sex, a fitting oxymoron for him to mouth since he will never have sex with the African American woman he desires. Over and against the black body, he deploys a "civilization" vague enough so that when "the negro" puts "his hands" on it, no one cries rape.

The intellectuals gathered at the conversazione also describe the advantages of miscegenation without sex. Their math is simple enough: minus sex and the body, miscegenation merely becomes nation. All that remains after the subtraction of copulative matter is citizenship. Disembodied subjects best qualify for political membership. Addressing other members of a black public sphere, a minister invited to the bourgeois symposium applies this formula of unthreatening amalgamation by relocating the "negro problem" to an abstract plane. "We may not," he says, "have the same dash, courage, and aggressiveness of other races . . . but surely the world needs something better than the results of arrogance, aggressiveness, and indomitable power," and then gestures to myths of African American moral sweetness and forgiveness as the much-needed corrective (195). Stereotyped Anglo-Saxon domination is tempered by the fabled Christlike meekness of African

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America. Conceived in miscegenation that transpires without sex, the ideal body politic places bodies under catachrestic erasure. The reverend disembodies and dis-corporates African Americans so that they can be reborn—much as the Fourteenth Amendment relies on birth as the foundation for civil rights—as citizens. Insofar as this liberal formula represents a sublimation of bodies, it adheres to what Chantal Mouffe disdains as "the liberal negation of the political."⁸⁵ Miscegenation without sex perfectly typifies a national utopia where African American citizenship is inert. Miscegenation without sex locates citizenship in a geography where the landscape is arid and barren, offering neither justice nor affirmative recognition for those who seek intimate, meaningful contact with the political.⁸⁶

As a coda, it is important to note that the citizens bloodlessly birthed by citizenship as the result of sexless miscegenation are not absolutely alone. This bland, frictionless existence has the same contours as Aunt Linda's postpolitical "hebben." Citizens generated by miscegenation without sex uncannily resemble the dead. Under such an existence, politics achieves its necrophilic desire, its beloved always—the necro citizen.

Afterword

While productive of vibrant political lives, U.S. ideals of citizenship and democracy have often alienated and depoliticized subjects. In the wake of such alienation, formal legal persons endowed with rights can become dehistoricized bodies. Although *Necro Citizenship* has been concerned with rhetoric and discourse that deadens embodied subjects, I do not mean to suggest that the positive goals of political recognition and enfranchisement are dead values. Human emancipation and social justice cannot proceed without commitments to freedom and equality framed by the pragmatic workings of citizenship and democracy. But neither do I want to overlook the fact that realizations of democratic citizenship in the United States have legitimated hierarchy and estrangement as natural and necessary to our political condition.

By way of a final comment, I turn to the 1871 Supreme Court decision, Blyew v. United States, that squared citizenship and death. The facts in the case are these: on the night of 29 August 1868, two white men, Blyew and Kennard, broke into a cabin and used a broadax to kill three members of a Kentucky black family and seriously wound a fourth, seventeen-year-old Richard Foster. Two days later, Richard died of his injuries, but not without first identifying the two white men as the murderers. Richard's younger sister, Laura, hid in a trundle bed and escaped. She saw and heard enough to corroborate her dead brother's story later at the trial of Blyew and Kennard. Under the jurisdiction of the 1866 Civil Rights Act, the case came before a U.S. circuit court as a federal, not a state, matter. By taking the case to the federal level, U.S. attorneys circumvented Kentucky's black code, which prohibited blacks from giving testimony against white citizens. Also among those slain was Richard and Laura's blind grandmother, Lucy Armstrong. The argument for federal jurisdiction hinged on the citizenship status of this ninety-year-old woman. Because "the said

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Lucy Armstrong was a citizen of the United States, having been born therein, and not subject to any foreign power," the case was removed beyond Kentucky state courts to a U.S. circuit court.¹ Citizenship held out the promise of a fair trial by identifying Armstrong as a member of a national political community, and therefore vested with rights and protections.

The defendants, however, made a successful motion that challenged the question of federal jurisdiction, and so the two Klan members walked free. The Supreme Court then took up the case on appeal. The final judgment handed down at this level was remarkable for its legal illogic, which credited Armstrong with citizenship only to deny it to her in death. Writing for the majority, Justice William Strong did not doubt that the improbability of blacks finding justice in Kentucky courts had made it desirable to bring the case under federal jurisdiction. He agreed with the posthumous averment of citizenship for Armstrong, implicitly accepting the wisdom of the Civil Rights Act that protected blacks under the rubric of national citizenship and indemnified them to testify against whites. But he also maintained that since the Civil Rights Act "refers to persons in existence," Armstrong as a dead citizen had no civil rights.²

Because the dead do not enjoy federally guaranteed rights, as Strong ruled, Blyew and Kennard's indictment had been improperly directed to the circuit court, which never had lawful jurisdiction. Armstrong's mortally injured body disappeared under this interpretation. What took its place was the reified and impersonal political body of the state-in this case, the state of Kentucky. As lawyers for the state argued, "This murder was committed on the soil of Kentucky and within *her* limits. . . . [I]t was an insult to *her* dignity and an outrage on the peace of a community which, by the organic law of the land, was placed under her protection. . . . [and thus] her law was offended by it." ³ Under this gendered plea, two white men could not damage the "dignity" of a black citizen's body; rather, the U.S. government had insulted the disembodied political virtue of a former Confederate state whose legal system upheld vestiges of slavery. The symbolic womanhood of the state trumped the materially specific womanhood that Armstrong had lived for ninety years.

Against the judgment in *Blyew* that the dead do not have rights and in keeping with more recent legal challenges on behalf of dead citi-

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zens, notably people of color, this book has sought to show that the dead at the very least have a history. While U.S. political culture revolves around intercourse with the dead-from suicidal slaves to injured white male sexual subjects, and from passive female clairvoyants to generic though lifeless citizens-the dead do not remain eternally estranged. No matter how enamored the state and its citizenry are of passive subjects, political necrophilia is also charged with an impossible desire to forget the dead. The very longing to achieve an end to the dynamic possibilities of democratic action nonetheless reanimates memories of the persons who once embodied such possibilities. As the U.S. attorneys who unsuccessfully tried to convince Justice Strong to render a different opinion stated, "It is unreasonable to suppose" that a "small portion of freedom" will be enough to make people content.⁴ Citizenship is an important political category, but as it has been traditionally conceived of and practiced, it has worked to ensure that persons claim no more than small portions of freedom, so thin and unsubstantial as barely to nourish embodied, complex, and materially specific political lives.

The body count has grown with each chapter of this book: the incantation "Death is Freedom" emancipated Clotel and other slaves; Sylvester Graham and other reformers cathect white male sexuality to the presumably socially dead identities of black slaves; Zenobia's corpse is literally dead weight for the men who carry her back to the farmhouse; Harriet Jacobs preserves memories of her father and Nat Turner; Frances Harper laments the citizen's short historical life span. In each scenario, however, the dead are also invested with a material specificity, which although perhaps nearly forgotten, worries the calm reserve of depoliticized citizenship. The question remaining is whether we can worry about how citizenship satisfies the desire of political necrophilia. We might then remember that the corpse bears heavy ideological weight. This page intentionally left blank

Notes

Preface

- 1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* (1850; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1983), 241.
- 2 Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter*, 252.

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- 1 Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1985), 5, 98, 99.
- 2 William Cullen Bryant, "Thanatopsis," in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym et al., 3d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 1:890, 891.
- Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym et al., 3d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 1:1712.
- 4 Jean Leca, "Questions of Citizenship," in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community,* ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1992), 30.
- 5 The notion of a public sphere comes from Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991). In chapters 3 and 5, I explore and critique notions of the public sphere in detail. On the importance of the AIDS quilt and Vietnam Veterans Memorial to public memory, see Marita Sturken, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations* 35 (summer 1991): 118–42.
- 6 Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Knopf, 1981), 604, 369, 378. John Paul Russo expands on the conjunction of Eros and Thanatos as a "psychomachia . . . in which attempts to distance death or to hide it only intensify fascination," a complex cultural response that produces necrophilia and sadomasochism as topics of aesthetic rep-

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resentation ("Isle of the Dead: A Classical Topos in J. Fenimore Cooper, Sheridan Le Fanu, and Arnold Böcklin," in *Il classico come norma e come mito nelle letterature inglese e anglo-americana*, ed. Cristina Giorcelli [Rome: Edizioni Associate, 2001]). For an early account of the intimacy with death in the antebellum United States, see Lewis O. Saum, "Death in the Popular Mind of Pre–Civil War America," in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 30–48.

- 7 Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 65. Moreover, as Caroline Bynum maintains, the contemporary focus on the body tends to overlook materiality as it tunes out a history of "conversations about death" ("Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22 [autumn 1995]: 12).
- 8 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, in *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 7.
- 9 Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death*, 1799–1883 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 1.
- 10 Brown, States of Injury, 62.
- 11 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, in The Essential Rousseau, trans. Lowell Blair (New York: Mentor, 1974), 47, 73.
- 12 Chantal Mouffe, The Return of the Political (London: Verso, 1993), 8.
- 13 Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, in *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Random House, 1950), 386, 399.
- 14 See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990). Jean Baker discusses the oratorical culture that made republicanism a significant public ethos well into the nineteenth century ("From Belief into Culture: Republicanism in the Antebellum North," *American Quarterly* 37 [fall 1985]: 532–50). But even as republicanism offers an alternative to liberalism's merely negative liberty and self-interest, Daniel T. Rodgers asserts that it "threatened to end up, by its very parallelisms, reifying and reconfirming the liberalism it had been designed to escape" ("Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History* 79 [June 1992]: 38).
- 15 According to Rogers M. Smith, historians have tended to explain the inclusions and exclusions of citizenship along one of two analytic grids: republicanism or liberalism. In compiling a history that focuses on "America's illiberal, undemocratic traditions" of "civic development," Smith supports my turn to contestatory sites other than republicanism. But by implementing a "historical institutional approach," his study cannot address under-

standings of and challenges to citizenship that emerged outside of officially recognized discourses (*Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997], 39, 6).

- 16 Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 3, 127.
- 17 See Lauren Berlant, The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), especially the chapter titled "Live Sex Acts," 55–81. On the tendency toward privatization, see also Sheldon S. Wolin, The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) 25–31.
- 18 Daniel Lazare, "America the Undemocratic," *New Left Review* 232 (November/December 1998): 8.
- 19 Julia A. Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 9.
- 20 William E. Connolly, "Democracy and Territoriality," in *Rhetorical Republic: Governing Representations in American Politics*, ed. Frederick M. Dolan and Thomas L. Dumm (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 250; and Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, trans. David Macey (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 199.
- 21 Berlant, Queen of America, 20.
- 22 Death, at one level, ordains the permanence of material conditions. As Gary Laderman observes, "The history of death in nineteenth-century urban America demonstrates a litany of class divisions, racial prejudices, and gendered distinctions" (*Sacred Remains*, 40). At another level, death is also about the impermanence of the mortal body—and the social institutions experienced and histories lived by that body.
- 23 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 160–61.
- 24 Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology—Marxism without Guarantees," in *Marx: A Hundred Years On*, ed. Betty Matthews (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), 68. Roland Barthes posits a similar understanding of ideology as a form of depoliticized speech that "mak[es] contingency appear eternal" (*Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers [New York: Hill and Wang, 1987], 142).
- 25 Karl Marx, "The German Ideology: Part I," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 147, 154.
- 26 Marx, "German Ideology," 147, 155.
- 27 Dana D. Nelson, "'No Cold or Empty Heart': Polygenesis, Scientific Professionalization, and the Unfinished Business of Male Sentimentalism," *differences* 11 (fall 1999/2000): 44.

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- 28 Ariès, Hour of Our Death, 404.
- 29 Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 11.
- 30 On the discursive construction of the body's materiality, see Judith Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex" (New York: Routledge, 1993). I discuss this idea and Butler at greater length in chapter 4.
- Rousseau writes of specificity as something that endangers political ar-31 rangements based on liberal consensus: "Thus, just as a particular will cannot represent the general will, the general will in turn changes its nature when it has a particular object, and cannot, in its capacity as the general will, pronounce judgment on either a man [sic] or a fact . . . it should be apparent that what makes a will general is not so much the number of individuals involved as the common interest that unites them, for under this system each man necessarily submits to the conditions he imposes on others. This admirable concordance between self-interest gives collective deliberations an equitable character that vanishes in a discussion of any particular matter in which there is no common interest to unite and identify the criteria of the judge with those of the party" (Social Contract, 29). The critical literature on the tense interplay of particularity and forms of abstraction established by the U.S. nation-state, liberal public sphere, and modernity is extensive. In addition to the already cited works of Lauren Berlant, Wendy Brown, and Nancy Fraser, see Lauren Berlant, "National Brands/National Body: Imitation of Life," in Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text, ed. Hortense Spillers (New York: Routledge, 1991), and "Intimacy: A Special Issue," Critical Inquiry (winter 1998): 281-88; David Lloyd, "Nationalism against the State," in The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 173-97; Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in Phantom Public Sphere, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 234-56; and Robyn Wiegman, American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995).
- 32 It is to this end that Bruce Burgett cautions against an approach that "naturalizes the body as an uncontested ground of post-colonial liberation" (*Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998], 18).
- 33 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1851; reprint, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), 26.
- 34 Berlant, Queen of America, 12.
- 35 Lloyd describes certain manifestations of nationalism, characterized by "the irrationality of its particularity," that bear an antagonistic relation

to the centripetal pull of the state ("Nationalism against the State," 179). Kaplan and Pease advance discussion about the international shaping, often through colonial violence and imperialist exploitation, of national identity (Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993]); see also Donald E. Pease, "National Identities, Postmodern Artifacts, and Postnational Narratives," *boundary 2* 19 (1992): 1–13.

- 36 See Wai Chee Dimock, *Residues of Justice: Literature, Law, Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 10; and Bill Brown, *The Material Unconscious: American Amusement, Stephen Crane, and the Economies of Play* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4.
- 37 This paragraph and the next are drawn from my essay, "Within the Veil of Interdisciplinary Knowledge? Jefferson, Du Bois, and the Negation of Politics," *New Literary History* (winter 2000), 781–804. That essay presents a fuller and more detailed critique of interdisciplinarity than I offer here.
- 38 James T. Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7.
- 39 Mouffe, *Return of the Political*, 12, 151–52.
- 40 See Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992).
- 41 Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*, trans. Maurizia Boscagli (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 335.

I Political Necrophilia: Freedom and the Longing for Dead Citizenship

- I Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 65. Any discussion of the vocabulary of freedom takes on added complexity because *freedom* and *liberty* are often used interchangeably. For a look at these confusions as well as an etymological treatment of freedom, see Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, "Are Freedom and Liberty Twins?" *Political Theory* 16 (November 1988): 523–52. See also Michael Kammen, who identifies "languages of liberty" from the early republic to the post-Reconstruction era (*Spheres of Liberty: Changing Perceptions of Liberty in American Culture* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986], 9).
- 2 On this idea of freedom from or negative liberty, see Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 118–72. John Gray contextualizes negative liberty as a lack of

impediments, not in terms of motion but in selecting values and formulating choices (*Isaiah Berlin* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995]). But also see Quentin Skinner, who turns to Machiavelli in an effort to uncouple negative liberty from individual rights ("The Idea of Negative Liberty: Philosophical and Historical Perspectives," in *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, ed. Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1984], 193–221).

- 3 Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*, trans. Richard Dixon et al. (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 3:30.
- 4 Edward W. Said, "Nationalism, Human Rights, and Interpretation," in Freedom and Interpretation: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures, 1992, ed. Barbara Johnson (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 199. From the antebellum era through the Civil War years, articulations of freedom demanded national contexts. For Henry Ward Beecher, speaking in March 1862 on "The Beginning of Freedom" just after Abraham Lincoln endorsed the idea of compensated emancipation, freedom itself supplied an almost sexual energy to make one's compatriots into national subjects: "Liberty has been at work breeding citizens at the North. They are national. They love the whole country." (Freedom and War: Discourses on Topics Suggested by the Times [Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863], 231). In such an example, liberty provides the grist of national narrative. My purpose here, however, is not to uncover an already blatant nationalist script but rather to examine how this universalist-nationalist appeal conditions freedom.
- 5 Wai Chee Dimock, *Residues of Justice: Literature, Law, Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 114, 116.
- 6 Ibid., 110. My thinking about political syntax as opposed to semantics stems from Dimock's contextualization of justice (119–20). See also Hortense Spillers, who links projects of African American liberation to disrupting the syntax of legal identities in the United States and introducing "a new *semantic* field/fold" ("Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 17 [summer 1987]: 79). But see also Mary Ann Glendon, who claims, "Our rights talk is like a book of words and phrases without a grammar and syntax," a complaint that has the effect of pushing for Marx's true unity by not grappling with the incomplete histories and unspoken critiques that lie beneath U.S. rights discourse (*Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* [New York: Free Press, 1991], 14).
- 7 Alonzo Miner, An Oration Delivered before the Municipal Authorities of the City of Boston, at the Celebration of the Seventy-Ninth Anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 1855 (Boston: Moore and Crosby, 1855), 5.

- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid., 18–19.
- 10 Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 76. See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988). Pateman writes that men "share a common interest in upholding the original contract which legitimizes masculine right and allows them to gain material and psychological benefit from women's subjection. . . . The civil individual and the public realm appear universal only in relation to and in opposition to the private sphere, the natural foundation of civil life. Similarly, the meaning of civil liberty and equality, secured and distributed impartially to all 'individuals' through the civil law, can be understood only in opposition to [the] natural subjection (of women) in the private sphere" (113–14).
- 11 Lauren Berlant, "National Brands/National Body: Imitation of Life," in Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text, ed. Hortense Spillers (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112–13.
- 12 See Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998).
- 13 Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 70.
- 14 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "On Freedom," in Autographs for Freedom, ed. Julia Griffiths (Auburn, N.Y.: Alden, Beardsley, 1854), 235. For a thorough treatment of Emerson's slow acceptance of the abolitionist agenda, see Len Gougeon, Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990).
- 15 Emerson, "On Freedom," 235–36.
- 16 David Bromwich, A Choice of Inheritance: Self and Community from Edmund Burke to Robert Frost (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 143.
- 17 George Kateb, *Emerson and Self-Reliance* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995), 25. See also his *The Inner Ocean: Individualism and Democratic Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 90–96.
- 18 Bromwich, A Choice of Inheritance, 148. For a radically different reading, see Christopher Newfield on the ways in which "personal independence" leads to authoritarian management of the self (*The Emerson Effect: Individualism* and Submission in America [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996], 6–13).
- 19 This is not to ignore the experiential base that differentiates black abolitionism and white antislavery views. See, for instance, C. Peter Ripley, who argues that "by 1840 two distinct abolitionisms existed. Whites approached slavery and freedom on an abstract ideological plane; blacks defined slavery

and freedom in more concrete, experiential terms. White abolitionism drew largely upon evangelical theology and theories of universal reform; black abolitionism was grounded in political philosophy, and shaped by daily experiences in a racist society" (*The Black Abolitionist Papers* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991], 3:24).

- 20 Juliette Bauer, "The Daughter of the Riccarees," in *The Liberty Bell: By Friends of Freedom* (Boston: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1849), 10:65–66.
- 21 William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or, the President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States* (1853; reprint, New York: Carol, 1969), 216. By equating suicide and freedom, the daughter of the Riccarees anticipates Maurice Blanchot's reading of suicide as an act that resounds with the possibility of "absolute freedom" ("Death and Possibility," *The Space of Literature,* trans. Ann Smock [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982], 99). Blanchot's explanation that a self-chosen death "would be an apotheosis of the *instant*... an event which one can look neither back upon nor forward to," gestures to the annihilation of history so crucial to freedom (103).
- 22 Berlant, Queen of America, 80.
- 23 Lauren Berlant, "National Brands/National Body," 133.
- 24 "The Slave Mother's Appeal to Her Infant Child," in *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane, Formerly of Raleigh, N. C.*, in *Five Slave Narratives: A Compendium*, ed. William Loren Katz (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 4. Interracial circumstances surrounding the production, publication, and distribution of the slave narrative, while certainly not unconflicted, suggest that white and black abolitionists participated in common rhetorical fields.
- 25 Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), 57.
- 26 Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 102.
- 27 Lunsford Lane, *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane, Formerly of Raleigh, N.C.*, in *Five Slave Narratives: A Compendium*, ed. William Loren Katz (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 17. The echoes to Franklin extend beyond Lane's financial accounting to encompass an accounting of the self and the self's appearance. Much as Franklin worried over his dress and demeanor as they would be perceived by his fellow citizens, Lane takes care that North Carolina citizens—though not his fellows—receive a pleasing public persona: "Ever after I entertained the first idea of being free, I had endeavored so to conduct myself as not to become obnoxious to the white inhabitants, knowing as I did their power, and their hostility to the colored people.... I had made no display of the little property or money I possessed, but in every way I wore as much as possible the aspect of poverty" (31). In this

respect, Lane exemplifies what Houston A. Baker Jr. identifies as the economic recognition of selfhood prevalent in slave narratives (*Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984], 38–39).

- 28 Lane, Narrative, 51, 17–18.
- 29 William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 118. Andrews also discusses the Franklinesque aspects of Lane's autobiographical persona.
- 30 Lane, Narrative, 17.
- 31 Quoted in Brown, *Clotel*, 221–22. As with the daughter of the Riccarees, the overembodied form of Clotel futilely appeals to a disembodied white male legacy symbolically housed in Washington's crypt. On Brown's ambivalent negotiation of this patriarchal/patriotic legacy, see Russ Castronovo, *Fathering the Nation: American Genealogies of Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 210–18. Robert S. Levine observes in his introduction to the Bedford Cultural Edition of *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000) that this poem acquires a new final stanza when Brown incorporates it in his novel. The quoted text, then, most probably begins with Greenwood's words and ends with Brown's, a transition that evidences racial ventriloquism.
- 32 Brown, Clotel, 221.
- 33 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 57. Eric Lott marks this desubstantialization of black bodies as a widespread cultural repression of homoerotic desire and miscegenationist anxiety—two phenomena deeply rooted in intimate corporealities (*Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993], 58–59).
- 34 Henry Bibb, Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself (1850; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 44, 188–89. Bibb's commitment to kinship and intersubjectivity departs from notions of freedom as independence by situating freedom in a shared context that reaches beyond the borders of self. Intersubjective conceptions of freedom—whether based in familial or communal contexts—have often been overshadowed by notions of negative liberty, which address social limitations on the subject. Yet slave narratives such as Bibb's and Harriet A. Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself (1861; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) powerfully reveal subjects who experience freedom as diminished by the enslavement of others. For a reading of Jacobs in this light, see Stephanie A. Smith, "The Tender of Memory: Restructuring Value in Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: New Critical Essays, ed. Deborah M. Garfield and Rafia

Zafar (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 251–74. Recent theoretical attempts to posit freedom as a collective experience can be found in Wayne Booth's thoughts on "*philiation*" ("Individualism and the Mystery of the Social Self; or, Does Amnesty Have a Leg to Stand On?" in *Freedom and Interpretation: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures, 1992*, ed. Barbara Johnson [New York: Basic Books, 1993], 81); Orlando Patterson's study of love and friendship in the classical world (*Freedom, Volume 1: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* [New York: Basic Books, 1991], 126–29); and Jean-Luc Nancy's meditations on freedom as a sharing of being (*The Experience of Freedom*, trans. Bridget McDonald [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993], 68–80).

- 35 Bibb, Narrative, 17, 33-34. For recent projects to uncover the contingency and historicity that lies behind political rights, see Wendy Brown, States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism," in Feminists Theorize the Political, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992); Bonnie Honig, Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Kristie McClure, "On the Subject of Rights: Pluralism, Plurality, and Political Identity," in Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1992), 108-27.
- 36 Bibb, Narrative, 189, 188.
- 37 Ibid., 35, 44 (emphasis added).
- 38 Paul Gilroy, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 63. For a similar interrogation, see Cornel West, who wonders if "death is the great liberator from suffering and evil" ("Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization," in The Future of the Race, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Cornel West [New York: Knopf, 1996], 89). West, however, prefers a more affirmative politics: he uncouples liberty and death, looking instead to "forms of individual and collective black resistance predicated on a deep and abiding black love" (90). But what happens, to invoke the title of another Gilroy essay, after the love has gone, when love is commodified, exclusively heterosexual, and narrowly aestheticized? The public politics of freedom, Gilroy fears, have been replaced by a private, exclusive, and commodified biopolitics. See Paul Gilroy, "'After the Love Has Gone': Bio-Politics and Etho-Poetics in the Black Public Sphere," in Back to Reality? Social Experience and Cultural Studies, ed. Angela McRobbie (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1997), 83-115.
- 39 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 66, 68. This episode of slave infanticide is the kernel of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. While slave infanticide is not at all uncom-

mon in antislavery materials, few actual cases have been verified: see Steven Weisenburger's treatment of the Margaret Garner tragedy, *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

- 40 Baynard Hall, *Frank Freeman's Barber Shop: A Tale* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1852), 121.
- 41 Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz, *The Planter's Northern Bride* (1854; reprint, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 352.
- 42 Hall, Frank Freeman's Barber Shop, 185-86.
- 43 Mary Henderson Eastman, *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or, Southern Life as It Is* (1852; reprint, (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), 217.
- 44 Ibid., 54. Vindictive sentences of deathlike freedom recur in proslavery texts. "She is dead to us," says the white mistress of *Frank Freeman's Barber Shop* in reference to the runaway slave who has abandoned the mistress and her children (251). But whereas freedom under this representation destroys community, proslavery theorists constructed slavery as a system that fostered close-knit bonds of sympathy and affection between masters and slaves. See, for instance, Albert Bledsoe, *An Essay on Liberty and Slavery* (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott, 1856), 288–89.
- 45 John W. Page, *Uncle Robin, in His Cabin in Virginia, and Tom without One in Boston* (Richmond, Va., 1853), 246.
- 46 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845; reprint, (New York: Signet, 1968), 111.
- 47 James Pennington, The Fugitive Blacksmith; or, Events in the History of James W. C. Pennington, Pastor of a Presbyterian Church, New York, Formerly a Slave in the State of Maryland, in Five Slave Narratives: A Compendium, ed. William Loren Katz (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 14–15. These two examples are indicative of a large pattern in which freedom figures as alienation. For other instances of slaves and former slaves who describe the loneliness of freedom, see Bibb, Narrative, 48; and Jacobs, Incidents, 62.
- 48 See Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).
- 49 Patterson, Freedom, 11.
- 50 Patterson, Slavery, 337.
- 51 William Wells Brown, *The Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave,* in *Five Slave Narratives: A Compendium,* ed. William Loren Katz (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 93–94. Later, however, Brown modifies this position, seeking to invest his freedom with the contexts of memory: "I wanted to see mother and sister, that I might tell them 'I was free!' I wanted to see my fellow slaves in St. Louis, and let them know that the chains were no longer upon my limbs" (103).

⁵² Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 33.

- 53 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 3.
- 54 Honig, *Political Theory*, 79. See also her remarks on "performative freedom" (124) in conjunction with Jacques Derrida, "Declarations of Independence," trans. Tom Keenan and Tom Pepper, *New Political Science* 15 (summer 1986): 7–13.
- 55 Brown, States of Injury, 106. For more on Brown's recognition of depoliticization, see also 112; and Michael Maidan, "Marx on the Jewish Question: A Meta-critical Analysis," Studies in Soviet Thought 33 (1987): 27–41.
- 56 Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 45. Also helpful here is Marx's criticism of Bruno Bauer in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*, trans. R. Dixon (1845; reprint, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), 117–59.
- 57 Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 45. Marx's faith in a historical dialectic explains this ambivalence, in which political emancipation, while limited, is nonetheless a necessary step toward the ultimate breakdown of bourgeois class rule. As Wendy Brown explains, "Political emancipation in the form of civil and political rights can be embraced precisely because it represents a 'stage' of emancipation" (*States of Injury*, 120).
- 58 Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855; reprint, Salem, Mass.: Ayer, 1968) 164. For the remainder of this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
- 59 For further treatment of the differences between Douglass's 1845 and 1855 autobiographies, see David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 108–34; and Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 96; Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 76.
- 60 Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 42.
- 61 Ibid., 45, 46, 48.
- 62 David McLellan and Paul Lawrence Rose each remark on the double sense of *Judentum*, but draw different conclusions on the issue of Marx and anti-Semitism. For McLellan, this double meaning "saves" Marx, allowing McLellan to argue that Marx is only invoking *Judentum* as commerce and is unconcerned with its religious or ethnic connotations (*Marx before Marxism* [Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1970], 183). Rose, in contrast, more convincingly suggests that Marx appeals to both meanings: Jews "are the demonic personification of capitalism *and* the actual agents who have produced capitalism with its attendant distortion of human relations and freedom" (*Revolutionary Antisemitism in Germany from Kant to*

Wagner [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992], 302). Indeed, it is difficult to understand McLellan's claim that only half—the socially progressive half—of a double meaning is being invoked. For a sense of the critical debates surrounding Marx's anti-Semitism, see Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism*, 301. Wendy Brown provocatively intervenes in this debate to "suggest that in objecting to his [Marx's] anti-Semitism, we may not know the real nature of our objections, what unique place the charge of anti-Semitism occupies in our psyches, what psychic place is held by the self-hating Jew, and why it is this and not Marx's terrible remarks about Africans or silences about women that is at issue" (*States of Injury*, 101 n. 10).

2 "The Slavery of Man to Himself":White Male Sexuality, Self-Reliance, and Bondage

- 1 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (1690; reprint, Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing, 1980), 52.
- 2 On catachresis, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 26, 29, 64; and Rodolphe Gasché, introduction *Readings in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, and Heidegger*, by Andrzej Warminski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), liii–lx. Spivak and Gasché agree that catachresis refers to an improper or abusive naming, and Gasché suggests that it functions as a "far-fetched metaphor like 'leg of a table' or 'face of a mountain'" (liii). But while Gasché claims that catachresis lies at the heart of "the tropological system" of language (liii), Spivak confines her argument to a "narrow sense" (298) to describe the postcolonial invocation of Enlightenment concepts such as catachrestic ill-fitted adjustments between European and non-European contexts. My use of catachresis is limited to a historically specific situation—the slaveholding United States–in order to explain the structure and consequences of an embodied political discourse.
- 3 Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Sex as Symbol in Victorian Purity: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Jacksonian America," in *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family*, ed. John Demos and Spence Boocock (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 228. Smith-Rosenberg also situates the concern for male chastity among other reformist movements, asserting that its reformist energy compared to crusades such as temperance and abolition (216).
- 4 Moira Gattens, "Corporeal Representation in/and the Body Politic," in *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. Katie Conbay, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 81, 86.

- 5 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 18.
- 6 Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 6.
- 7 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* (1850; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1983), 203.
- 8 See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1968), 220; and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Robert E. Spiller and Wallace E. Williams (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 3:188.
- 9 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Individual," in *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Robert E. Spiller and Wallace E. Williams (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 2:176.
- 10 R. N. Trall, Home Treatment for Sexual Diseases: A Practical Treatise on the Nature and Causes of Excessive and Unnatural Sexual Indulgence, the Diseases and Injuries Resulting therefrom, with Their Symptoms and Hydropathic Management (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1853), 57.
- II George R. Calhoun, Report of the Consulting Surgeon on Spermatorrhea, or Seminal Weakness, Impotence, the Vice of Onanism, Masturbation, or Self-Abuse, and Other Diseases of the Sexual Organs (1858), in The Secret Vice Exposed! Some Arguments against Masturbation, ed. Charles Rosenberg and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (New York: Arno Press, 1974), 5. Peter Gay's discussion of the circumstances surrounding the publication of Calhoun's pamphlet points to the philanthropic patronage of antimasturbation discourse. In 1858, a group of public health crusaders underwrote the printing and free distribution of 5,000 copies of Calhoun's report. And three years later, a new edition was funded. See Peter Gay, Education of the Senses: The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 296–98.
- 12 Calhoun, Report, 6.
- 13 Emerson, "The Individual," 2:176.
- 14 Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life, 2d ed. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 148, 170. While Elkins's and others' insistence on the individual as the building block of a romantic social vision is well known, this chapter explores the consequences of reading the body as a political cipher. For more on the antiinstitutional tenor of antebellum reform, see John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815–1865," American Quarterly 17 (winter 1965): 656–81; and A. N. Kaul, The American Vision: Actual and Ideal Society in Nineteenth-Century Fiction (New York: Yale University Press, 1963), 8–32. On the individualist character of antislavery reform, see George M. Fred-

rickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 33, 41; Lawrence J. Freidman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830–1870* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 231; and Daniel J. McInerney, *The Fortunate Heirs of Freedom: Abolition and Republican Thought* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 89, 154. On the individualist character of hygienic reform, see Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 19, 131–36; James C. Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 7; and Joan Burbick, *Healing the Republic: The Language of Health and the Culture of Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 302–5.

15 Christopher Newfield, The Emerson Effect: Individualism and Submission in America (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 13. Emersonian maxims often appeared in popular publications directed at white men: The Library of Health, for instance, approvingly cited passages from Emerson's "Man the Reformer" that speak of "simple tastes" and a diet of "parched corn" (The Library of Health, and Teacher on the Human Constitution 5 [Boston, Mass.: George W. Light, 1837–1842]:228). Publishers of phrenological, physiological, and hygienic pamphlets also brought out cheap editions of Emerson's works, and audiences at lyceums and other public venues could listen to a series of lectures on hygiene and male chastity one week, and sample more intellectual, though still discursively related, fare about civic virtue and self-reliance the next. As Miles Coverdale testifies, the public sphere of the village lyceum hall schedules a "winter course of lectures" in the Emersonian mode, and then features "the itinerant professor [who] instructs separate classes of ladies and gentlemen in physiology" (Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance [1852; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1986], 196). Physiology thus had deep connections to self-making framed in accordance with Emerson's earliest avowals of selfreliance; for variations on this theme at a later moment, see Michael Sappol, "Sammy Tubbs and Dr. Hubbs: Anatomical Dissection, Minstrelsy, and the Technology of Self-Making in Postbellum America," Configurations 4, no. 2 (1996): 131-83. Emersonian self-reliance is both a producer and product of popular physiological concepts. David S. Reynolds documents one half of Emerson's dialectical engagement with popular culture, arguing that writers of the American Renaissance incorporated and reworked the thematics and stylistics of popular literary genres. Reynold's assertion does not necessarily flow the other way, however, to examine popular culture's incorporation and reworking of elitist literary productions (Beneath

the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989], 7–10).

- 16 Library of Health, 4:344, 342, 343. This monthly periodical, first titled Moral Reformer, was edited by William A. Alcott, president of the American Physiological Society. Peter Gay describes Alcott as a vocal participant in "that mixed genre, the medico-religious text" (Education of the Senses, 305). The fact that Alcott could push homeopathy even as he acted as the head of a professional medical society reveals medical discourse as permeable to ideas and rhetoric found in transcendental, abolitionist, moral, and political discourse.
- 17 Library of Health, 4:345. Sexual discourse is not just about sex and effects more than sex. As Karen Sánchez-Eppler and Ronald Walters have suggested in respective studies of temperance and abolitionism, cultural contexts resonating within potentially idiosyncratic languages of reform also structure thought and meaning at larger social and political levels. See Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Temperance in the Bed of a Child: Incest and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 47 (March 1995): 9; and Ronald Walters, "The Boundaries of Abolitionism," in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 21.
- 18 Whereas Tissot believed that masturbation should be avoided because one ounce of seminal fluid contained as much vital energy as forty ounces of blood, U.S. hygienic reformers did not inveigh against orgasm and the loss of semen per se as enervating and draining but instead suggested that the combination of mental and physical stimulation produced by autoeroticism weakened the body's nervous system, rendering the self susceptible to a "habit" likened to tyranny and bondage.

The U.S. proliferation of antimasturbation literature is well documented. John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman (*Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* [New York: Harper and Row, 1988]) note the emergence of "an abundant anti-masturbation literature" (71) in the 1830s, and Stephen Nissenbaum describes "the sudden emergence of an unprecedented public apprehensiveness about human sexuality" (*Sex, Diet, and Debility,* 26). See also T. Walter Herbert, *Dearest Beloved: The Hawthornes and the Making of the Middle-Class Family* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 190–94; G. M. Goshgarian, *To Kiss the Chastening Rod: Domestic Fiction and Sexual Ideology in the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 45–46; Phillip A. Gibbs, "Self Control and Male Sexuality in the Advice Literature of Nineteenth-Century America, 1830–1860," *Journal of American Culture* 9 (summer 1986): 37– 42; and Richard Harrison Shyrock, "Sylvester Graham and the Popular

Health Movement," in *Medicine in America: Historical Essays*, ed. Richard Harrison Shyrock (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 111–25.

- 19 Calhoun, Report, 22; Trall, Home Treatment, x, 48; and Ellen G. White, An Appeal to Mothers: The Great Cause of the Physical, Mental, and Moral Ruin of Many of the Children of Our Time (1864; reprint, Payson, Ariz.: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1984), 25. For an example of a nativist posture in medical literature, consider this 1839 U.S. review of Léopold Deslandes's A Treatise on the Diseases Produced by Onanism, Masturbation, Self-Pollution, and Other Excesses, which asked: "But why is it necessary to introduce French books on this subject, when we have better ones of our own? The works of Graham and Woodward breathe a Christian spirit; but can we say this of the work of Deslandes? Have we not great reason to regret the introduction, in every form, of that infidel philosophy for which France has been so long distinguished?" (Library of Health 3 [1839]:104). The sexual and political are confused to such an extent that sexual license appears simply as the latest manifestation of a dangerous liberty associated with the French Revolution. Or as Ralph Waldo Emerson put it in a statement of literary protectionism, "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands draws to a close" ("The American Scholar," in Essays and Lectures [New York: Library of America, 1983], 53).
- This assortment of euphemisms for masturbation, both in terms of its 2.0 practice and cure, is scattered throughout antimasturbation literature. Examples are from Sylvester Graham, A Lecture to Young Men (Providence, R.I.: Weeden and Cory, 1834), 44, 51; Orson S. Fowler, Sexual Science; Including Manhood, Womanhood, and Their Mutual Interrelations; Love Its Loves, Power, Etc., Selection, or Mutual Adaption; Married Life Made Happy; Reproduction, and Progenal Endowment, or Paternity, Maternity, Bearing, Nursing, and Rearing Children; Puberty, Girlhood, Etc.; Sexual Ailments Restored, Female Beauty Perpetuated, Etc., Etc., as Taught by Phrenology (Philadelphia, Pa.: National Publishing Company, 1870), 379, 380; William Sweetser, Mental Hygiene: Or, an Examination of the Intellect and Passions, Designed to Show How They Affect and Are Affected by the Bodily Functions, and Their Influence on Health and Longevity (New York: George Putnam, 1850), 386; Samuel Gregory, Facts and Important Information for Young Women on the Subject of Masturbation: With Its Causes, Prevention, and Cure (1857), in The Secret Vice Exposed! Some Arguments against Masturbation, ed. Charles Rosenberg and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (New York: Arno Press, 1974), 14, 62; *Library of Health*, 2:298, 4:343, 5:316, 5:317, 6:106; and Trall, Home Treatment, 57. The rhetorical role of slavery in lending a distinctive, urgent idiom to bourgeois reform efforts was not limited to antimasturbation discourse. Drunkards became "slaves to drink" in what David

Roediger portrays as a broad tendency to configure white working-class identity within and against popular understandings of race slavery (The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class [New York: Verso, 1991], 86). Prostitutes became "white slaves" as David Pivar notes (Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868–1900 [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973], 7). Slavery exerted a wide appeal among the diverse interests of social reform. Crusaders for temperance often doubled as antislavery activists, firing off denunciations of alcoholism and chatteldom that stigmatized individuals for enslavement to different forms of bodily control. Frederick Douglass, for one, likened the "slave system" to the "drinking system," in effect, privatizing racial bondage as a question of individual responsibility (My Bondage and My Freedom (1855; Reprint, Salem, Mass.: Ayer, 1968):150. Such associations of corporeality and unfreedom, as Robert S. Levine has shown, were part of a reformist confluence between temperance and antislavery (Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997], 99–143). One of the best sources for such metaphoric slippages is Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Abolition and Feminism," Representations 24 (fall 1988): 28-59.

- 21 Seth Pancoast, Onanism, Spermatorrhoea, Porneiokalogynomania-pathology: Boyhood's Perils and Manhood's Curse; an Earnest Appeal to the Young of America (Philadelphia, Pa., 1858), 132.
- 22 Ibid., 151.
- 23 Library of Health, 4(1840):345–46.
- 24 "Masturbation and Its Effect on Health," *Graham Journal of Health and Longevity* 2 (1838): 19. On the construction of masturbation as a disease, see H. Tristam Englehardt Jr., "The Diseases of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 48 (summer 1974): 234–48.
- 25 William M. Cornell, The Beacon: Or, a Warning to Young and Old, in Which Is Shown, in the Medical Practice of the Author, How Body and Mind Are Destroyed by Evil Habits; Resulting in Epilepsy, Consumption, Idiocy, and Insanity (Philadelphia, Pa.: F. Humphrey and Co., 1865), 57, 59–60. The implicit rant against children's maids further privatizes the family, warning against opening the bourgeois home to members of a servant class.
- 26 See David Brion Davis, "Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony," in *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 173.
- 27 This slippage from abstract body politic to specific corporeality would qualify as an instance of what Dana Nelson calls "national manhood," ex-

cept that here sexuality condenses national politics into questions of individual corporeality. See Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 15.

- 28 "Emancipatory social intervention," writes Gayatri Spivak, "is a question of developing a vigilance for systemic appropriations" (*Outside*, 63). Many segments of nineteenth-century liberal reform eschewed any such vigilance, however, and instead advocated a variety of emancipations (for example, freedom from drink, unregulated sexuality, and racial bondage) that treated the single citizen, isolated from institutions and divorced from material circumstances, as the locus of freedom.
- 29 William Alcott, "Physiological Vice," *Library of Health* 1 (1837): 160.
- 30 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 262.
- 31 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman, Alfred G. Ferguson, George P. Clark, and Merrell R. Davis (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 5:484.
- 32 Quoted in Library of Health 6 (1842): 291.
- 33 Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 266. This perspective is also evident in "Spiritual Laws," where Emerson argues that the specific issues of liberal reform, including antislavery activism, become insignificant in the face of "universal" considerations: "When we come out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition-convention, or the Temperance-meeting, or the Transcendental club, into the fields and woods, she [Nature] says to us, 'So hot? my little Sir'" (in *Essays and Lectures* [New York: Library of America, 1983], 307). "Nature" here disdains specific acts of cultural criticism because her concern is wrapped up with the single citizen who has become overexcited and agitated.
- 34 Graham, A Lecture to Young Men, 43.
- 35 Library of Health 6 (1842): 231.
- 36 Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought, with a New Preface* (1973; reprint, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 228.
- 37 G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 165.
- 38 Cornell, Beacon, 45.
- 39 See Christopher Looby, "'The Roots of the Orchis, the Iuli of Chesnuts': The Odor of Male Solitude," in *Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoeroticism*, ed. Paula Bennet and Vernon A. Rosario II (New York: Routledge, 1995), 163. The circulation of numerous

antimasturbation tracts, according to Ronald Walters, amounts to a tacit admission that "authority and knowledge no longer flowed down from parents but rather that, with increasing privacy at home and with large parts of days spent in schools, children were gaining their sources of information and status, beyond parents' control" (*Primers for Prudery: Sexual Advice to Victorian America* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974], 41).

- 40 George Kateb, *Emerson and Self-Reliance* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995), 176. See also his *The Inner Ocean: Individualism and Democratic Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 77–83.
- 41 Samuel B. Woodward, *Hints for the Young in Relation to the Health of Body and Mind* (1838), in *The Beginnings of Mental Hygiene in America: Three Selected Essays*, 1833–1850, ed. Gerald N. Grob (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 9, 31.
- 42 William Alcott, *Library of Health 6* (1842): 24, 106. It should be noted that Alcott here is discussing women's "enslavement" to "useless, degrading, unhealthy, unchristian customs," implying both specific bodily habits such as the tight lacing of corsets as well as unspecified sexual practices.
- 43 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Fugitive Slave Law," in *Emerson's Antislavery* Writings, ed. Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 83. Emerson reiterated this sentiment two years later in an antislavery address on "bloody" Kansas: "I set the private man first. He only who is able to stand alone is qualified to be a citizen" (113). Of course, as Richard F. Teichgraeber III has pointed out, it is no great revelation that scholars have long deemed Emerson an "anti-institutionalist" for his reluctance to join organized abolition (Sublime Thoughts/Penny Wisdom: Situating Emerson and Thoreau in the American Market [Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995], 110). But Teichgraeber's recuperative view of Emerson is itself dependent on an asocial view of literary history: he treats Emerson as a "formidable and free-standing figure" (151), echoing Emerson's own search for a figure "able to stand alone." Popular discourse will not allow Emerson to stand alone, though. Within the dialectical view that I am advocating here, Emerson is both a producer and product of popular culture.
- 44 Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 263.
- 45 Emerson, "Fugitive Slave Law," 83. Len Gougeon charts Emerson's initial reluctance to and gradual acceptance of an abolitionist platform (Introduction to *Emerson's Antislavery Writings*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995], and *Virtue's Hero: Emerson*, *Antislavery, and Reform* [Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990]).
- 46 Quentin Skinner, "The Idea of Negative Liberty: Philosophical and Historical Perspectives," in *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography* of *Philosophy*, ed. Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner

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(Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 213. See also Quentin Skinner, "On Justice, the Common Good, and the Priority of Liberty," in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1992), 211–24.

- 47 Pancoast, Onanism, Spermatorrhoea, 22.
- 48 J. G. A. Pocock, Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 114–15.
- 49 Library of Health 4 (1840): 132. For less grandly metaphoric estimates of Graham's popularity and impact, see Nissenbaum, Sex, Diet, and Debility, 14–17. Selling 20,000 copies in a matter of months, Graham's A Lecture to Young Men was reprinted several times.
- 50 Graham, A Lecture to Young Men, 59, 27.
- 51 Ibid., 8, 19.
- 52 The Graham System entailed a multifarious plan to make one's body selfreliant and abstemious. Adherents avoided stimulus. They did not eat meat, pastry, or other rich foods, shunned alcohol and spices, took cold showers, and slept on hard mattresses. If they must experience orgasm, they tried to limit the event to no more than a dozen times a year.
- 53 Graham, *A Lecture to Young Men*, 14. Ronald Walters notes the popularity of Graham's ideas among abolitionists ("Boundaries of Abolitionism," 11), and Regina Markell Morantz-Sanchez discusses abolitionists who stayed in Graham boarding houses (*Sympathy and Science: Women Physicians in American Medicine* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1985], 32).
- 54 William Tyler to Edward Tyler, quoted in Thomas H. Le Duc, "Grahamites and Garrisonites," *New York History* 20 (April 1939): 190. Henry David Thoreau and Horace Greeley also adhered to the dietary "laws" of the Graham System. A Graham table could also be found at the experimental utopian community, Brook Farm.
- 55 Beriah Green to Theodore Dwight Weld, 11 July 1841, Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822–1844, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1934), 2:868.
- 56 Graham, A Lecture to Young Men, 7-8, 16.
- 57 While catachresis is most often understood as an abusive *trope*, for the slaveholding United States, catachresis figured as a supremely useful *mode* of managing frustrated desires to eradicate racial bondage. If, as Rodolphe Gasché observes, catachresis frequently transfers elements of the human body to objects (as in giving a "head" to a cabbage), then nineteenth-century slippages between body and body politic not only humanized but embodied what was for many Northerners a distant crisis over the slave system as a matter of personal hygiene. See Gasché, introduction lx.

- 58 Josiah Crosby, "Seminal Weakness-Castration," Boston Medical and Surgical Journal 29 (9 August 1843): 10-11. As educational reformer Horace Mann put it in 1850, "Health is earned—as literally so any commodity in the market" (A Few Thoughts for a Young Man: A Lecture Delivered before the Boston Mercantile Library Association on its Twenty-ninth Anniversary [1850; reprint, Boston: Reed and Fields, 1877], 21). As with Crosby's emphasis on financial health as physiological health, Mann connects male sexuality to commerce in what historians have called a "spermatic economy." Thomas Laqueur discusses connections between nonprocreative sexuality and commercial practice ("The Social Evil, the Solitary Vice, and Pouring Tea," in Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoeroticism, ed. Paula Bennet and Vernon A. Rosario II [New York: Routledge, 1995], 157-60, and "Credit, Novels, Masturbation," in Choreographing History, ed. Susan Leigh Foster [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995], 119-28). On the connection of masturbation in particular and male sexuality in general to capital, see Jeff Nunokawa, "The Miser's Two Bodies: Silas Marner and the Sexual Possibilities of Commodity," Victorian Studies 36 (spring 1993): 275.
- 59 Boston Medical and Surgical Journal 29 (6 September 1843): 97.
- 60 Edward L. Baker, "A Few Cases Illustrative of the Ill Effects of Onanism," Southern Medical and Surgical Journal 2 (June 1846): 337.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 "Effects of Masturbation," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 12 (11 March 1835): 140.
- 63 E. Anthony Retundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 24.
- 64 Charles Butler, *The American Gentleman* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Hogan and Thompson, 1836), 29, 167. On connections between urbanism and fears of masturbation, see Vernon A. Rosario II, "Phantastical Pollutions: The Public Threat of Private Vice in France," in *Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoeroticism,* ed. Paula Bennet and Vernon A. Rosario II (New York: Routledge, 1995), 111.
- 65 Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 281.
- 66 Trall, Home Treatment, xiv; and Graham, A Lecture to Young Men, 9.
- 67 Graham, A Lecture to Young Men, 9; and Emerson, "American Scholar," 56.
- 68 Graham, *A Lecture to Young Men*, 59; and "Treatment of Spermatorrhoea," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 50 (27 November 1856): 352. Spermatorrhoea, a nineteenth-century term describing the involuntary loss of semen, was thought to be caused by habitual masturbation.

- 69 Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough mention laws enacted in Wyoming and Indiana as indicators of the force of antimasturbatory arguments in *Sexual Attitudes: Myths and Realities* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995), 73.
- 70 Joseph W. Howe, Excessive Venery, Masturbation, and Continence: The Etiology, Pathology, and Treatment of the Disease Resulting from Venereal Excesses, Masturbation, and Continence (New York: Bermingham and Company, 1883), 62-63. Jacques Derrida examines enduring representations of onanism as a nonnatural, acquired behavior. Taking Rousseau as his example, he contends that Enlightenment discourse endows masturbation with a supplemental status, as something added onto an originally pure and unencumbered subjectivity. But the recognition that "masturbation comes to be added to so-called normal sexual experience; culture to nature, evil to innocence, history to origin, and so on," leads Derrida to conclude that subjectivity is itself constructed from supplemental urges (Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976], 167). For a U.S. example of the insistence on the subject's original purity, see Orson Fowler's declaration that "the animus [for masturbation] is not from within" (quoted in Barker-Benfield, Horrors of the Half-Known Life, 233).
- 71 White, An Appeal to Mothers, 16, 11, 19.
- 72 John Todd, The Student's Manual: Designed, by Specific Instructions, to Aid in Forming and Strengthening the Intellectual and Moral Character and Habits of the Student, 5th ed. (Northampton, Mass.: J. H. Butler, 1835), 93, 147. G. J. Barker-Benfield reports that by 1854, Todd's handbook had gone through twenty-four editions (Horrors of the Half-Known Life, 136).
- 73 Todd, Student's Manual, 111–12.
- 74 Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 12, 20.
- 75 Assertions that masturbation's degenerative effects were inherited suggest the citizen's impossible longing for disconnection from all history, even family history. In addition to Seth Pancoast, William Cornell details the congenital effects of masturbation to describe how "out of four hundred twenty cases of congenital idiocy, the Massachusetts Commission found in three hundred fifty-six of them that one or the other, or both, of the immediate progenitors of the unfortunate sufferers had, in some way, widely departed from the normal condition of health, and violated the laws of nature." Contamination of future generations, Cornell fears, might not be unintentional: "Parents have been found, who encourage in their children—how horrid! . . . that vicious habit which is the general theme of

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this book" (*Beacon*, 56–57). The citizen's severe social independence—once guaranteed by his property, whiteness, and maleness—no longer seemed a surety in an era that historicized his previously unmarked corporeality.

- 76 Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 261, 282.
- 77 "Masturbation," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 27 (10 August 1842): 104.
- 78 Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility*, 164. Nissenbaum also reports that in 1838, Gove opened a Graham boarding school in Lynn, Massachusetts. Acclaimed by a contemporary journal as "that indefatigable champion of the cause of female instruction in Hygiene and Physiology," Gove was credited with organization of "Health Societies" in New York, Boston, and Oberlin much in the same way that Graham boarding houses sprang up in the cities of the northeast (*Library of Health* 4 [1840]: 40). After obtaining a divorce from an abusive husband, Gove later married the reformer Thomas Nichols, and together they continued their reform labors throughout the late nineteenth century.
- 79 Mary S. Gove, *Lectures to Women on Anatomy and Physiology, with an Appendix on Water-Cure* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846), 174, 26.
- 80 Mary S. Gove, Agnes Morris; or, the Heroine of Domestic Life (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1849), 36. For Emerson's use of similar language, see his "Divinity School Address" on "our soul-destroying slavery to habit" (in Essays and Lectures [New York: Library of America, 1983], 89).
- 81 Calhoun, *Report*, 42. If, to invoke Thomas Laqueur's simile, the "body is like an actor on stage, ready to take on the roles assigned it by culture," then the U.S. body in the script provided by Emerson, Graham, Gove, and other reformers studiously forgets culture's multiple and constant interpellations (*Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990], 227).
- 82 Jean Fagan Yellin discusses the circulation of gender and race in such abolitionist emblems and images (*Women and Sisters: The Antislavey Feminists in American Culture* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989]).
- 83 Quoted in David L. Smiley, *Lion of White Hall: The Life of Cassius M. Clay* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1969), 56.
- 84 Graham, *A Lecture to Young Men*, 44. This overlap between governmental and physiological "constitution" is crucial to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notion of a social contract in which the state improves on the human body's fragile constitution (*The Social Contract*, in *The Essential Rousseau*, trans. Lowell Blair [New York: Mentor, 1974], 74). As Michael Moon has noted, the word *constitution* lends political valence to several antebellum discourses, including temperance reform and antionanist campaigns (*Disseminating Whitman: Revision and Corporeality in Leaves of Grass* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 16–19).

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- 85 Quoted in James Cabot, A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1857), 2:427. Emerson's speech was recorded by James Cabot. According to Len Gougeon, Cabot's version—comprised both of summary and citation is the only extant version of Emerson's address. For a similar sentiment by another popular reformer, see Henry Ward Beecher: "The slave is often happier than the master, who is nearer undone by license than his vassal by toil" (*Twelve Lectures to Young Men, on Various Subjects* [(1845; reprint, New York: D. Appelton and Company, 1881], 9).
- 86 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Emerson's Antislavery Writings*, ed. Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 17. On the sexualization of the slaveholding South, see Ronald Walters, "The Erotic South: Civilization and Sexuality in American Abolitionism," *American Quarterly* 25 (May 1973): 177–201.
- 87 John Rankin, Letters on American Slavery, Addressed to Mr. Thomas Rankin, Merchant at Middlebrook, Augusta Co., Va. (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1833), 68, 112–13. Lydia Maria Child's "The Emancipated Slaveholders," appearing in the 1839 volume of The Liberty Bell, by Friends of Freedom (Boston: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839), also represents slavery as a form of white bondage that only industrious self-reliance can cure. For a treatment of "slavery as an injustice to whites" in the arena of congressional politics, see Jared Gardner, Master Plots: Race and the Founding of an American Literature, 1787–1845 (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 108. The canonical statement of slavery as a danger to white morality comes from Thomas Jefferson; see Ronald T. Takaki, Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Knopf, 1979), 53.
- 88 Emerson, "The Individual," 2:176.
- 89 Graham, Letter to the Hon. Daniel Webster, on the Compromises of the Constitution (Northampton, Mass.: Hopkins, Bridgeman, and Co., 1850), 18,
 3. For the remainder of this chapter, references to this work will be noted parenthetically in the text.
- 90 Graham, Lecture, 14.
- 91 Graham, *Lecture*, 40, 19. This nervous connection between the genitals and the brain may have prompted Joseph Howe to develop the following medical simile: "The testicle, like the brain, has three coverings, a serous, fibrous, and vascular coat" (*Excessive Venery*, 37).
- 92 Graham, Lecture, 16.
- 93 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 67.

3 "That Half-Living Corpse": Female Mediums, Séances, and the Occult Public Sphere

- I Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 31.
- 2 Hal Foster, "Death in America," *October* 75 (winter 1996): 55, n.55. While Foster notes that the "term 'psychic nation' may be too slippery to define" (55 n.55), Seltzer's *Serial Killers* outlines the technological, cultural, and psychological conjunctions that produce "the model of a sociality bound to pathology" in the twentieth century (258).
- 3 Amariah Bringham, *Remarks on the Influence of Mental Cultivation and Mental Excitement upon Health*, in *The Beginnings of Mental Hygiene in America: Three Selected Essays, 1833–1850*, ed. Gerald N. Grob (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 78. I borrow the phrase "mental hygiene" from a contemporaneous pamphlet: William Sweetser, *Mental Hygiene: Or, an Examination of the Intellect and Passions, Designed to Show How They Affect and Are Affected by the Bodily Functions, and Their Influence on Health and Longevity* (New York: George Putnam, 1850).
- 4 Foster, "Death in America," 55 n.55.
- 5 Robert C. Fuller describes how the techniques of mesmerism were taken up by "the burgeoning field of dynamic psychiatry" (*Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982], 12).
- 6 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 49.
- 7 For instance, Zenobia's accusation against Hollingsworth "Self, self, self! You have embodied yourself in a project" — serves both as a pathology and critique of liberal humanitarian reform (Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* [1852; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1983], 218). For this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text.
- 8 Habermas, Structural Transformation, 35.
- 9 Ibid., 56. Emphasis in original.
- 10 Ibid., 46. Emancipation is central to Habermas's narrative of the public sphere, appearing throughout chapter 2 of *Structural Transformation* ("opinion' became emancipated from the bonds of economic dependence" [33-34], "emancipation of civic morality from moral theology and of practical wisdom from the philosophy of scholars" [43], "the emancipation ... of an inner realm [47], and "emancipation of civil society from mercantilist rule and absolutist regimentation" [56]). While subsequent chapters

detail breakdowns of this emancipatory promise, here the public sphere and individuals it creates seem autonomous and coherent.

- 11 Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xlvi.
- 12 Miriam Hansen, foreward to Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere, by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvii. On the exclusion of gender under the masculine neutrality of the public sphere, see Mary P. Ryan, "Gender and Public Access: Women's Publics in Nineteenth-Century America," in Habermas and the Public Sphere, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 259–88; and Joan Landes, "The Performance of Citizenship: Democracy, Gender, and Difference in the French Revolution," in Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 295–313.
- 13 Jon Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 255.
- 14 See ibid., 225–56; and Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6. The New York-based cultlike religious movement led by a self-proclaimed prophet who called himself Matthias that Johnson and Wilentz depict employed a spiritual rhetoric different from that of mesmerism and spiritualism. While mesmerism and spiritualism appealed to bourgeois reformers and women's rights advocates, followers of Matthias were fiercely patriarchal and scornful of mercantile interests.
- 15 See Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 25–30. The ambivalent genealogy in which the "private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion," suggests the potential for incoherence within both the private "interiority" and public sphere created in this transit (25–26). If, as Lauren Berlant observes, "liberal society was founded on the migration of intimacy expectations between the public and the domestic," do these spheres remain separate, and what happens to the identity of each when they touch and become confused? ("Intimacy: A Special Issue," *Critical Inquiry* [winter 1998]: 284). This ambivalent genealogy becomes even more ambivalent in light of Nancy Ruttenberg's argument that a public presence in North America developed outside the liberal, rational discourse associated with the public sphere. Her examination of the Salem witchcraft crisis details a model of "public voice unconnected to rational debate in a Habermasian

public sphere" (*Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998], 3). As nineteenth-century psychospiritual discourse overlapped with citizenship via mesmerism and then spiritualism, however, liberalism in its ascendant mode was firmly in existence under the U.S. nation-state. Liberalism may not have been a strong determinant in 1692 but by the 1830s it was in full force.

- As a type of political discourse that stages the public admission of private 16 desire, Coverdale's confession is much more than an anticipation of the confessional mode current in contemporary U.S. public life, made popular, if not mandatory, by the personal interview, press conference, and ubiquity of the television talk show. Bill Clinton admits to his carryings-on with a White House intern, evangelist Jimmy Swaggart claims his sin, Jimmy Carter makes what he thought would be an innocuous comment about the lust in his heart: immortalized by flashbulbs and sound bites only to fade, these moments stand as sensational echoes of a banal obsession with airing indiscretion whose origins date back at least as far the democratic experiments of the nineteenth century. Hawthorne's novel suggests that such invasively public moments are not really about the loss of privacy; rather, they are about the articulation of citizenship as a private affair. On the confused identification of privacy with politics, see Mark Seltzer's reversal of the 1960s' epigram: "The notion that 'the personal is the political' has been reversed, turned round to the notion that the 'political is the personal'" (Serial Killers, 258). See also Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," Critical Inquiry (winter 1998): 547-66.
- 17 Margaret R. Somers, "The Privatization of Citizenship: How to Unthink a Knowledge Culture," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 121–61.
- 18 Habermas, Structural Transformation, 54.
- 19 Charles Poyen, introduction to *Report on the Magnetical Experiments Made by the Commission of the Royal Academy of Medicine, of Paris, Read in the Meetings of June 21 and 28, 1831*, by Henri Marie Husson (Boston: D. K. Hitchcock, 1836), xxxix. The political valence of spiritual and early psychological discourses in non-U.S. contexts has been noted as well. See Robert Darnton for a discussion of "political somnambulism" (Mesmerism and the *End of the Enlightenment in France* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968], 108).
- 20 Quoted in Uriah Clark, Plain Guide to Spiritualism: A Hand-Book for Skeptics, Inquirers, Clergymen, Believers, Lecturers, Mediums, Editors, and All Who Need a Thorough Guide to the Phenomena, Science, Philosophy, Religion, and Reforms of Modern Spiritualism, 4th ed. (Boston: William

White and Co., 1863), 31. Aware that these new movements lacked institutional authority, most supporters were careful to include testimony of each movement's broad-based appeal as a way of claiming democratic authority. Contemporary critics and historians have agreed with what spiritualists and mesmerists had to say about their wide popularity; see Daniel Cottom, Abyss of Reason: Cultural Movements, Revelations, and Betrayals (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5, 27, 41; Fuller, Mesmerism, 15; R. Laurence Moore, In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3-4; Howard Kerr, Mediums, Spirit-Rappers, and Roaring Radicals: Spiritualism in American Literature, 1850–1900 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 3-9; Ruth Brandon, The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1984), 40; Russell M. Goldfarb and Clare R. Goldfarb, Spiritualism and Nineteenth-Century Letters (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1978), 26, 38; and Gary Laderman, The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 55, 61.

- Zillah, the Child Medium; a Tale of Spiritualism (New York: Dix, Edwards, 21 and Co., 1857), iii. Throughout this chapter I discuss mesmerism and spiritualism in the same breath even though many differences exist between the two movements/pseudosciences. Yet mesmerism and spiritualism are part of an overlapping cultural continuum in which spiritualism incorporates mesmerist theories of magnetism and the unconscious. For many reformers, spiritualism was the final development of mesmerism's utopian possibilities. Thus Uriah Clark's Plain Guide to Spiritualism averred, "Most of those who were at first mesmeric subjects are now acknowledged as spirit mediums" (112). Edgar Allan Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" also suggests how quickly animal magnetism could bleed into a type of spiritual practice, and Simon C. Hewitt cited spiritualist healing's reliance on "Electricity and Magnetism" as an inheritance of "the old Mesmeric way" (Messages from the Superior State; Communicated by John Murray, through John M. Spear in the Summer of 1852: Containing Important Instruction to the Inhabitants of the Earth, Carefully Prepared for Publication, with a Sketch of the Author's Early Life, and a Brief Description of the Spiritual Experience of the Medium [Boston: Bela Marsh, 1853], 19, 41).
- 22 On Sophia Peabody's consultations with a mesmerist and governess Ada Shephard's writing mediumship, see Gordon Hutner, *Secrets and Sympathy: Forms of Disclosure in Hawthorne's Novels* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 130; Taylor Stoehr, *Hawthorne's Mad Scientists: Pseudoscience and Social Science in Nineteenth-Century Life and Letters* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1978), 40; and Maria M. Tatar, *Spellbound: Studies on Mes*-

merism and Literature (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 205.

- 23 Fuller, *Mesmerism*, 21. Mesmerism "was intimately bound up with the life of popular culture," writes Fuller (15).
- 24 Quoted in William Howitt, *The History of the Supernatural in All Ages and Nations and in All Churches Christian and Pagan Demonstrating a Universal Faith* (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott, 1863), 2:196. Even more reckless estimates of the number of spiritualist followers had ranged as high as eleven million in the previous decade, the 1850s (Moore, *In Search of White Crows*, 14).
- 25 See Brandon, Spiritualists, 39.
- 26 Political and social issues were clustered about the occult. Mesmerism brought with it fears of foreign conspiracy, and spirit rapping had strong connections to women's rights, as Robert Levine and Ann Braude respectively show. See Robert S. Levine, *Conspiracy and Romance: Studies in Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 148; and Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).
- 27 Ryan, "Gender and Public Access," 264. See Michael Schudson, "Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 147. Schudson identifies 1840–1900 as the time span of what could best qualify as a public sphere in the United States.
- 28 On the interests of liberal reformers in mesmerism and spiritualism, see Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought, with a New Preface* (1973; reprint, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 188; Moore, *In Search of White Crows*, 3; Goldfarb and Goldfarb, *Spiritualism*, 61; and Lynn Wardley, "Relic, Fetish, Femmage: The Aesthetics of Sentiment in the Work of Stowe," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 205–8. I will examine the specific intersections of spiritualism, slavery, and abolition in chapter 4.
- 29 T. S. Arthur, *Agnes; or, the Possessed, a Revelation of Mesmerism* (Philadelphia, Pa.: T. B. Peterson, 1848), 16.
- 30 Samuel Coale, "The Romance of Mesmerism: Hawthorne's Medium of Romance," in *Studies in the American Renaissance, 1994*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 284. See also Samuel Coale, *Mesmerism and Hawthorne: Mediums of American Romance* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998). Convergences between mesmerism and narrative also appear in Holgrave's legend of Alice Pyncheon

that throws Phoebe into a trancelike reverie in Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables*, and in the fabric of the "A," still magnetized with the force of Hester's shame that scorches the narrator's breast in *The Scarlet Letter*. For links between narration and mesmerism, see Tatar, *Spellbound*, 226; and Jonathan Elmer, "Terminate or Liquidate? Poe, Sensationalism, and Sentimental Tradition," in *The American Face of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Shawn Rosenheimer and Stephen Rachman (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 117.

- 31 Lauren Berlant, "Fantasies of Utopia in *The Blithedale Romance*," in *The American Literary History Reader*, ed. Gordon Hutner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 17. For discussions of abstract, noncontingent self-hood in *Blithedale*, see Hutner, *Secrets and Sympathy*, 102–35; and Richard H. Millington, "American Anxiousness: Selfhood and Culture in Haw-thorne's *The Blithedale Romance*," *New England Quarterly* 63 (December 1990): 558–83. Joel Pfister's work offers an important exception by asserting that an academic concern with "subjectivity and personal life" stems from "a distinctly individualistic and often ahistorical vision" (*The Production of Personal Life: Class, Gender, and the Psychological in Hawthorne's Fiction* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991], 1).
- 32 Isaac Post, Voices from the Spirit World, Being Communications from Many Spirits. By the Hand of Isaac Post, Medium (Rochester, N.Y.: Charles H. McDonnell, 1852), 222.
- 33 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*, trans. R. Dixon (1845; reprint, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), 164. Emphasis in original. Michael Walzer references Marx's language here as one realization that under modernity, citizenship is an often thin, formalistic experience that does not involve the fullness of human experience ("Citizenship," in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. Terence Hall, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 217–18).
- 34 Negt and Kluge, Public Sphere and Experience, 2 n. 3.
- 35 John W. Edmonds and George T. Dexter, *Spiritualism, with an Appendix by Nathaniel P. Tallmadge*, 4th ed. (New York: Partridge and Brittan, 1853), 279. Edmonds's conversion to spiritualism after his wife's death lent credibility and authority to the movement. His reputation as an astute jurist also seemed to argue that no fraud could be involved in spiritual demonstrations.
- 36 Harriet Martineau, "Miss Martineau on Mesmerism" (8 February 1845), quoted in Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, ed. William E. Cain (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 302.
- 37 Habermas, Structural Transformation, 51, 54.
- 38 Berlant, "Fantasies of Utopia," 6. Also see Levine, Conspiracy and Romance,

which argues that Coverdale's final declaration "should perhaps be taken as a confession of his love not for Priscilla but for her situation" (156). What Coverdale loves about her situation is that it lacks context.

- 39 Habermas, Structural Transformation, 27.
- 40 George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 9 November 1840, Autobiography of Brook Farm, ed. Henry W. Sams (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), 6. On Ripley's spiritualist leanings, see Moore, In Search of White Crows, 3; and Coale, Mesmerism and Hawthorne, 106).
- 41 Constitution of the Brook Farm Association, for Industry and Education, West Roxbury, Mass., with an Introductory Statement, in Autobiography of Brook Farm, ed. Henry W. Sams (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), 96. The ethos of the association also worked to harmonize racial oppression and universal reform: as one member of Brook Farm wrote in December 1844, "I feel that the Association is doing and will do more for Antislavery than anything else can" (quoted in Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors* [1900; reprint, Seacaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1961], 122).
- 42 Eliab Wilkinson Capron, *Modern Spiritualism: Its Facts and Fanaticisms, Its Consistencies and Contradictions, with an Appendix* (1855; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1976), 379.
- 43 Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, 3 September 1841, quoted in Henry W. Sams, ed., Autobiography of Brook Farm (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), 34. Coverdale shares Hawthorne's tendency to romanticize labor. On this point, see Gillian Brown (Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990], 107–10]), and D. H. Lawrence's commentary on Hawthorne's negotiation of the contrast between "brookfarming" and "spectral" existence (Studies in Classic American Literature [New York: Viking, 1971], 105).
- 44 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852; reprint, New York: International Publishers, 1963), 15. My attention to the connections between Marx and spiritualism was first drawn by Cottom's argument in *Abyss of Reason* (5). And see, generally, Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International,* trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).
- 45 Richard H. Brodhead, "Veiled Ladies: Toward a History of Antebellum Entertainment," *American Literary History* 1 (summer 1989): 274.
- 46 Proceedings of the Free Convention Held at Rutland, Vt., June 25th, 26th, 27th, 1858 (Boston: J. B. Yerrington and Son, 1858), 179.
- 47 N. Parker Willis, "Post-Mortuum Soiree," in *The Rag-Bag, a Collection of Ephemera* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), 185.
- 48 Hewitt, Messages from the Superior State, 148.

- 49 Ibid., 114–15.
- 50 Quoted in Stoehr, *Hawthorne's Mad Scientists*, 42. On Sophia's experiments with mesmerist cures, see James Mellow, *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 190.
- 51 Arthur, Agnes, 101, 70. The year of Agnes's publication, coinciding with a wave of European revolutions, suggests that the political energies associated with mesmerism as discussed by Darnton in Mesmerism, endured well into the nineteenth century. Orestes Agustus Brownson's The Spirit-Rapper; an Autobiography (1854) explicitly connects faddish psychological investigations to the revolutionary political activity of Europe in 1848. Malcolm Bull's linking of Hegel's master-slave dialectic to animal magnetism indicates the ability of mesmerism, despite its celebrated emancipatory potential, to express an epistemology of bondage ("Slavery and the Multiple Self," New Left Review [1998]: 94–131). But by not considering the fact that the mesmerized subject is typically a young woman, his analysis transcends the specific political dimensions of early popular psychology that cathect mediumship to citizenship.
- 52 Arthur, Agnes, 100.
- 53 Teresa Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 98.
- 54 Eliab Wilkinson Capron and Henry D. Barron, Singular Revelations: Explanation and History of the Mysterious Communion with Spirits, Comprehending the Rise and Progress of the Mysterious Noises in Western New-York, Generally Received as Spiritual Communications, 2d. ed. (Auburn, N.Y.: Capron and Barron, 1850), 86.
- 55 Clark, Plain Guide to Spiritualism, 33.
- 56 Quoted in Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 181.
- 57 Capron and Barron, Singular Revelations, 47.
- 58 Charles Poyen, Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England: Being a Collection of Experiments, Reports, and Certificates, from the Most Respectable Sources, Proceeded by a Dissertation on the Proofs of Animal Magnetism (Boston: Weeks, Jordan, and Co., 1837), 82–83, 71.
- 59 Quoted in Poyen, *Animal Magnetism in New England*, 87. For slave suicide as a type of political necrophilia that provides release from political fort/da, see chapter 1.
- 60 Post, *Voices from the Spirit World*, 168. Teresa Goddu's analysis of the ideological bad faith of Priscilla-like mediums in simultaneously veiling and unveiling market forces is important here: "The motionless woman behind the veil represented the dual position of the Victorian woman in America: she both embodied the marketplace and made it disappear. . . . By imprisoning the lady in a separate, inviolate sphere, the veil symbolized her disappearance from the marketplace; behind her veil of private purity, the

lady took the 'true' woman's proper position in the spiritual sphere that transcended the economic one. Yet by signaling her performative nature, the veil uncovered the lady's connection to commercial culture: as the spectral object on display in the public sphere, she embodied the market transactions at the heart of 'true womanhood.' The veiled lady, then, both tamed and represented the monsters of the marketplace" (*Gothic America*, 97).

- 61 Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 6.
- 62 Poyen, Animal Magnetism in New England, 95.
- 63 Ibid., 136–37. Poe's "Strange Case of M. Valdemar" and "Mesmeric Revelation" present death and mesmerism as processes that interrupt natural biological temporality.
- 64 Carol Christ, "Painting the Dead: Portraiture and Necrophilia in Victorian Art and Poetry," in *Death and Representation*, ed. Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elisabeth Bronfen (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 141. Ann Douglas's work on nineteenth-century necrophilic biography is helpful in establishing links between death and millennial visions of social order ("Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in Northern United States, 1830–1880," in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975], 49–68).
- 65 Poyen, Animal Magnetism in New England, 66.
- 66 Alonzo E. Newton, ed., *The Educator: Being Suggestions, Theoretical and Practical, Designed to Promote Man-Culture and Integral Reform, with a View to the Ultimate Establishment of a Divine Social State on Earth, Comprised in a Series of Revealments from Organized Associations in the Spirit-Life, through John Murray Spear* (Boston: Office of Practical Spiritualists, 1857), 1:42. The political suggestiveness of this assembly is heightened by its "official" name: "CONGRESS of the spirit-world" (44).
- 67 R. E. L. Masters and Eduard Lea, *Sex Crimes in History: Evolving Concepts of Sadism, Lust-Murder, and Necrophilia—from Ancient to Modern Times* (New York: Julian Press, 1963), 121, 126. I am grateful to Julie Garces, whose final essay in my 1998 seminar at the University of Miami on "Sin, Sex, and Slavery" brought this work and its implications to my attention.
- 68 Capron and Barron, *Singular Revelations*, 34; *Zillah*, the Child Medium, 218; *Proceedings of the Free Convention*, 5, 146; and Newton, *The Educator*, 158.
- 69 Clark, *Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, 76. For additional instances of the spiritualization of politics, see the announcement in 1858 that "Spiritualism is the Great Emancipator" (*Proceedings of the Free Convention*, 145) years before a martyred Lincoln was granted this title. In *Dealings with the Dead*, the medium stood at the convergence of the occult and politics by promising that "constitutional delegates from the secret soul" would administer a sphere of perfect justice and equality (Paschal Beverly Randolph, *Deal*-

ings with the Dead: The Human Soul, Its Migrations and Its Transmigrations [Utica, N.Y.: M. J. Randolph, 1861–1862], 58–59). Spiritualism is saturated with examples of political rhetoric too numerous to cite. It is worthwhile to note, however, that political rhetoric was not just used in passing but makes up the heart and soul of this popular movement. Whole volumes of spiritualism describe in exhaustive detail how to implement a divine social order of perfect harmony. See especially the clairvoyant messages from the "CONGRESS of the spirit-world" spelled out at length in Newton's *The Educator*.

- 70 Clark, *Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, 49. Like many spiritualists, Clark was optimistic about the anti-institutional tenor of this new faith: "Spiritualism seeks to unfold the individual soul, and lift us above all governments and institutions. . . . We depend less on external circumstances and institutions than on those omnipotent energies which slumber within the soul" (205). As with the antimasturbation crusaders, spiritualists exercised an ahistorical sensibility that undercut systemic analysis.
- 71 Newton, *The Educator*, 475.
- 72 Quoted in Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 207. Emphasis in original.
- 73 Edmonds and Dexter, Spiritualism, 158.
- 74 Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 207.
- 75 Capron and Barron, Singular Revelations, 47. Emphasis in original. R. Laurence Moore discusses the Fox sisters as "commercial mediums" in public exhibitions (In Search of White Crows, 4, 47). Although most spiritualist testimonies and tracts take pleasure in recounting how the Fox sisters and other mediums baffled empiricists, Eliab Wilkinson Capron quotes at length from a report by two professors from the University of Buffalo who detected movement in the girls' legs (Modern Spiritualism, 314-15). See also the exposés gathered in Hiram Mattison, Spirit Rapping Unveiled! An Exposé of the Origin, History, Theology, and Philosophy of Certain Alleged Communications from the Spirit World, by Means of "Spirit Rapping," "Medium Writing," "Physical Demonstrations," etc., with Illustrations (New York: Mason Brothers, 1853), 175. Nineteenth-century explanations that spirit rappings proceeded from the girls cracking their toe joints concur with those offered by historians; see, for instance, Ernest Isaacs, "The Fox Sisters and American Spiritualism," in The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives, ed. Howard Kerr and Charles L. Crow (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 79–110.
- 76 Young women were only theoretically immune to economic conditions of the marketplace. Gillian Brown examines the economic contexts of the domestic sphere that was offered as a haven from an unfeeling world of commerce (*Domestic Individualism*, chaps. 1 and 2).
- 77 Hayden White, "Bodies and Their Plots," in Choreographing History, ed.

Susan Leigh Foster (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 233. Elizabeth Grosz explores the meaning of the body's seepages (*Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994], 194).

- 78 Capron and Barron, Singular Revelations, 91.
- 79 "To All Our Readers and Correspondents," *Holden's Dollar Magazine* 6 (September 1850): 574; Capron, *Modern Spiritualism*, 188; and Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 400.
- 80 Mattison, Spirit Rapping Unveiled! 58.
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin; or Life among the Lowly (1852; 81 reprint, New York: Penguin, 1981), 273, 428. St. Clare's pronouncement has to be coupled with Karen Sánchez-Eppler's argument about "the disciplinary possibilties of the child," especially the recognition that "children may effectively impose domestic order" ("Temperance in the Bed of a Child: Incest and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century America," American Quarterly 47 [March 1995]: 4). Sánchez-Eppler thus leads one to ask if Eva's homespun democracy may be beneficial to the "domestic order" of the planter class, if the child is offering democracy or discipline? Her worldly interaction, whether in the cause of liberation or oppression, demands her death in order to ensure that she not be touched by the material history of race during this interaction. Her death, according to Elisabeth Bronfen, represents "a translation of the body into a dematerialised form that eternally preserves the virgin girl. . . . [B]y implication, the death of Eva, the bride of Christ, prevents her sexual contamination. So that her sexual purity can be assured the narrative requires death" (Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity, and the Aesthetic [New York: Routledge, 1992], 91).
- 82 Joseph R. Buchanan, *Outlines of Lectures of the Neurological System of Anthropology, as Discovered and Taught in 1841 and 1842* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Buchanan's Journal of Man, 1854), 252, 255.
- 83 Edgar Allan Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation," in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 250.
- 84 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 9. See also their argument that the stratifying forces of capitalist subjectivity act like "pincers" to organize the body as a self (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987], 159). My juxtaposition of the bourgeois public sphere's promotion of "individuals' interiority by literary means" (Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 54) to capitalism's production of "the schizo" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 85) suggests how rational subjects in the public sphere—as well as the public sphere itself—are fractured by

complexes and contradictions. One has to wonder, however, if there is an echo of the occult's emancipatory project to theorize a plateau of existence beyond sociopolitical striving in Deleuze and Guattari's liberatory call, "Let's go further still, we haven't found our Bwo [body without organs] yet, we haven't sufficiently dismantled our self.... The Bwo is what remains when you take everything away" (*Thousand Plateaus*, 151).

- 85 Marcus Doel, "Bodies without Organs: Schizoanalysis and Deconstruction," in *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, ed. Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (New York: Routledge, 1995), 230. Emphasis in original.
- 86 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," in *Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 490. Emphasis in original.
- 87 Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 15.
- 88 Ibid., 9.
- 89 Capron, Modern Spiritualism, 354. Or, see Isaac Post's Voices from the Spirit World, which describes a realm free from material cares: "The spirit . . . is freed from that cumbrous body and its requirements and hindrances—no house to be built for it, no bread to prepare to sustain it, no clothes to provide, and therefore, all anxiety for these ceases" (136). Mediumistic communication was supposed to ease class division through a sort of distancelearning approach to self-improvement that would allow workers to receive the benefits of higher education without ever having to matriculate in a college or university. The departed explained to John Murray Spear how the "poorer or middling classes can be instructed without the paying of the exorbitant fees usually required of persons who desire to enter the halls of learning" by receiving spiritual messages (Newton, *The Educator*, 333).
- 90 Bronfen, Over Her Dead Body, 247.
- 91 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, in *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 20.
- 92 On the connection between phrenological investigations and mediumship, see Moore, *In Search of White Crows*, 106. On Coverdale's "grotesque version" of mesmerism, see Ffrangcon Lewis, "Women, Death, and Theatricality in *The Blithedale Romance*," *Journal of American Studies* 26 (April 1992): 76.
- 93 Edmonds and Dexter, *Spiritualism*, 150; and Parsons Cooke, *Necromancy;* or, *A Rap for the Rappers* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1857), 66.
- 94 Lawrence, Studies, 107.
- 95 Rueben Briggs Davenport, *The Death-Blow to Spiritualism: Being the True Story of the Fox Sisters, as Revealed by Authority of Margaret Fox Kane and Catherine Fox Jencken* (New York: G.W. Dillingham, 1888), 82, 222. Daven-

port advanced the now commonly accepted explanation that the Fox sisters created the noise of rapping spirits by cracking their toe joints. As evidence of the "humbug of spiritualism," he quotes from Hawthorne's "The Blythedale Romance [*sic*]" (162).

- 96 Francis Gerry Farfield, *Ten Years with Spiritual Mediums: An Inquiry concerning the Etiology of Certain Phenomena Called Spiritual* (New York: D. Appelton and Company, 1875), 23.
- 97 Ibid. Katherine Fox's alcoholism probably played a role in her declining constitution. See also the letter of Margaret Fox Kane linking her spiritualist activities to "softening of the brain and a lingering death" (quoted in Davenport, *Death-Blow to Spiritualism*, 31).
- 98 *The Confessions of a Magnetiser, Being an Exposé of Animal Magnetism* (Boston: Gleason's Publishing Hall, 1845), 11.
- 99 Arthur, Agnes, 102.
- 100 Brownson, Spirit-Rapper, 86.
- 101 Coverdale's rebuke of Silas echoes warnings that receptive female mediums take pains not to grant "access to persons from whose society they would otherwise be excluded," as Uriah Clark's *Plain Guide to Spiritualism* put it (233). Not all Veiled Ladies could be depended on to display Priscilla's extreme disengagement and remain unmoved by the lower-class contexts of the village hall lyceum described in *Blithedale*. The public medium needs to take "solemn caution against all undue freedom" (Clark, *Plain Guide to Spiritualism*, 233). "Undue freedom" materializes amid séances when bodies, too weighted down by socioeconomic organs, join a spiritual bourgeois communion.
- 102 Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 135.
- 103 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," in *Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 535. Emphasis added.
- 104 Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 54.

4 The "Black Arts" of Citizenship: Africanist Origins of White Interiority

- 1 William Lloyd Garrison, *Liberator* 24 (3 March 1854): 34.
- 2 Frank Webb, *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857; reprint, Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 190.
- 3 James Howard, *Bond and Free; a True Tale of Slave Times* (1886; reprint, Miami, Fla.: Mnemosyne, 1969), 213–14.
- 4 Manning Marable, "Religion and Black Protest Thought in African American History," in *African American Religious Studies: An Interdisciplinary An*-

thology, ed. Gayraud Wilmore (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), 332. Marable's conclusion builds on the groundbreaking work of Albert Raboteau, who also rejects readings of slave spirituality as an "acquiescence to injustice in the present" (*Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1978], 318).

- 5 Howard, Bond and Free, 214, 219.
- 6 Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 117.
- 7 Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (New York: Signet, 1968), 43, 80-81.
- 8 Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855; reprint, Salem, Mass.: Ayer, 1968), 242. My attention to the fight's connotation of equality is indebted to David Leverenz's comparison of Douglass's two autobiographies (*Manhood and the American Renaissance* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989], 115–16).
- 9 Lindon Barrett, "African-American Slave Narratives: Literacy, the Body, and Authority," *American Literary History* 7 (fall 1995): 415-42.
- 10 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 62.
- II Judith Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex" (New York: Routledge, 1993), 4.
- 12 Ibid., x.
- 13 Ibid., 2. Anthropologists examining the cultural basis of the senses, perception, corporeality, and memory have also stressed, but from a different perspective, the social, political, and linguistic determinations of materiality. See Thomas J. Csordas, "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology," *Ethos* 18 (March 1990): 5–47; C. Nadia Seremetakis, *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 2–13; and Setha M. Low, "Embodied Metaphors: Nerves as Lived Experience," in *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, ed. Thomas J. Csordas (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 139–62.
- 14 Butler, Bodies That Matter, 7.
- 15 Ibid., ix, 17.
- 16 Ibid., ix.
- 17 Critics attentive to the vexed placement of black women within white domestic traditions have mapped the narrow, cramped space allotted for representations of the materiality of the black female body within a sentimental discourse that privileged inner feeling over physical suffering. This sentimental space is as ideologically treacherous as it is discursively constrained. Once emphasized, the slave body becomes overemphasized, leading, as Mauri Skinful observes, to the "construction of black women as

mere bodies" ("Nation and Miscegenation: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," Arizona Quarterly 52 [summer 1995]: 71). See also Franny Nudelman, who examines Jacobs's negotiation of sentimentalism in representing the black woman's body ("Harriet Jacobs and the Sentimental Politics of Female Suffering," ELH 59: (winter 1992) 939-64.) In her analysis of Anita Hill's testimony before the Senate, Judith Butler recognizes the problematics involved in black women's telling about the body and sexuality: "As Hill utters the sexualized discourse, she is sexualized by it, and that very sexualization undercuts her effort to represent sexualization itself as a kind of injury" ("Sovereign Performatives in the Contemporary Scene of Utterance," Critical Inquiry 23 [winter 1997]: 361). Sandra Gunning notes that in dominant regimes of representation, black women's bodies lapse into "the grossly physical," becoming "fetishized" as an indelicate corporeality against which white women imagine their own disembodied moral virtue ("Reading and Redemption in Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," in Harriet Jacobs and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: New Critical Essays, ed. Deborah M. Garfield and Rafia Zafar [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 137, 135). Discussion of materiality in this minefield so sexualizes the slave woman that her story generates "the arousal of imagined sadistic pornography," according to P. Gabrielle Foreman ("Manifest in Signs: The Politics of Sex and Representation in Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," in Harriet Jacobs and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: New Critical Essays, ed. Deborah M. Garfield and Rafia Zafar [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 80).

- 18 Harriet A. Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself (1861; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 201. For the remainder of this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be noted parenthetically in the text. Bruce Mills discusses how the image of Jacobs's disembodied grandmother diverts attention away from the chaos and moral confusion of the narrator's terrestrial world ("Lydia Maria Child and the Endings to Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," American Literature 64 [June 1992]: 255–72).
- 19 What Linda finds strange may have been par for the course in terms of changing evangelical attitudes toward body and spirit, which as Gary Laderman states, witnessed a shift away from the "corruptibility of the dead body and graphic descriptions of it in the process of disintegration" and toward meditations "on the life of the spirit" (*The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996], 55).
- 20 R. Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 76. For a far-reaching discussion of the antipatriarchal critiques common to spiri-

tualism and abolitionism, see Daniel Cottom, *Abyss of Reason: Cultural Movements, Revelations, and Betrayals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 44–45. Such links are sensationally dramatized as a confusion between license and libertinism in Orestes Augustus Brownson's 1854 novel, *The Spirit-Rapper; an Autobiography.* Others who have noted the connections between these two reform movements include Ann Braude (*Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1989], 17) and Lewis Perry (*Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought, with a New Preface* [1973; reprint, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995], 219–20).

- 21 Marenda B. Randall, "Communication from N. P. Rogers," *Liberator* 22, no. 51 (17 December 1852): 24.
- W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk, in Three Negro Classics (New 22 York: Avon, 1965), 214. In addition to Du Bois, Pauline Hopkins in Hagar's Daughter (1901-1902) and Of One Blood (1902-1903) associated the mysterious symbolism of the veil, a garment literally worn by Priscilla during her psychic exhibitions, with West African religious customs that survived in the New World. My focus in this chapter treats a period earlier than the one represented by these turn-of-the-century African American novels, which are discussed by Susan Gillman, "Pauline Hopkins and the Occult: African-American Revisions of Nineteenth-Century Sciences," American Literary History 8 (1996): 57-82; Cynthia D. Schrager, "Both Sides of the Veil: Race, Science, and Mysticism in W. E. B. Du Bois," American Quarterly 48 (December 1996): 551-86; Thomas J. Otten, "Pauline Hopkins and the Hidden Self of Race," ELH 59 (1992): 227-56; Scott Trafton, "Egypt Land: Race and the Cultural Politics of American Egyptomania, 1800-1900" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1998) chap. 6; and Eric J. Sundquist, To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 574-76.
- 23 Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 34. On the adoption of West African religious beliefs by white reformers, see Lynn Wardley, "Relic, Fetish, Femmage: The Aesthetics of Sentiment in the Work of Stowe," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 24 Parsons Cooke, *Necromancy; or, A Rap for the Rappers* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1857), 49–50.
- 25 Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *The Results of Spiritualism, a Discourse, Delivered at Dodsworth's Hall, Sunday, March 6, 1859* (New York: S. T. Munson, 1859), 4.
- 26 "Mediumship among the Contrabands," *Banner of Light: A Weekly Jour*nal of Romance, Literature, and General Intelligence 22 (20 August 1864): 3.

This soldier was impressed with the clairvoyance among the slaves who had foreseen the Civil War and emancipation. The black mediums, according to this wartime dispatch submitted to the *Banner of Light*, also provided a heavenly vision that soothed white souls by auguring the disappearance of black bodies from U.S. shores: "But, Massa Lieutenant, de Lord showed this chile more den dat... He showed me dat after many years de colored people should pass away like de red man [*sic*], and be no more in dis country. Dat I did n't like; but de Lord knows what is right, bless him" (3).

- 27 Cooke, Necromancy, 29.
- 28 Charles Poyen, Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England: Being a Collection of Experiments, Reports, and Certificates, from the Most Respectable Sources, Proceeded by a Dissertation on the Proofs of Animal Magnetism (Boston: Weeks, Jordan, and Co., 1837), 41.
- 29 Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood: Or, the Hidden Self,* in *The Magazine Novels of Pauline Hopkins,* with an introduction by Hazel V. Carby (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 486, 487.
- 30 Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 54–74. For a postmodern anthropology of spirit possession and the modern state, see Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (New York: Routledge, 1997), esp. part 1.
- 31 Poyen, *Animal Magnetism in New England*, 41, 50. In 1848, France enacted emancipation for its colonial possessions in the West Indies.
- 32 Proceedings of the Free Convention Held at Rutland, Vt., June 25, 26th, 27th, 1858 (Boston: J. B. Yerrington and Son, 1858), 104.
- 33 Though "Slavery and Abolitionism" appears two years after Animal Magnetism in New England, Poyen stated that its composition precedes his published work on animal magnetism. The full title of his antislavery treatise is Philosophical and Historical Essay on Slavery, Followed by the Exposition of a New System of Measures for Civilization of Africa, and the Abolition of Slavery in the United States. Poyen refers readers to this work in Animal Magnetism as an example of his efforts "to assimilate myself to the American society" while teaching French language in Lowell (42). I have not been able to locate this work in full but have tracked down published excerpts in Literary and Theological Review, a journal whose title Poyen confuses as Theological and Literary Review.
- 34 Charles Poyen "Slavery and Abolitionism," *Literary and Theological Review* 6 (March 1839): 55.
- 35 Poyen, "Slavery and Abolitionism," 41, 42.
- 36 Houston A. Baker Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 53.
- 37 Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 129. Emphasis added.

- 38 Uday S. Mehta, "Liberal Strategies of Exclusion," Politics and Society 18 (1990): 427. For use of Mehta's critique of liberal theory in understanding U.S. race relations, see Maggie Montesinos Sale, The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 21–24.
- Iris Marion Young comes closer to suggesting a homology between equality 39 and inequality in her critique of universal citizenship. In its effort to rescue individuals from restrictive particularities that legitimate social mistreatment, universal citizenship idealizes a vague, homogeneous public. A common perspective that all are invited-or commanded-to entertain, however, often results in the suppression of other perspectives based on difference. "Strict adherence to a principle of equal treatment tends to perpetuate oppression or disadvantage," writes Young, explaining that such a principle in practice excludes group-specific needs, concerns, and histories. Her argument builds toward a stunning contradiction: "When participatory democratic structures define citizenship in universalistic and unified terms, they tend to reproduce existing group oppression" ("Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship," in The Citizenship Debates: A Reader, ed. Gershon Shafir [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998], 265).
- 40 Emma Hardinge Britten, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits* (1869; reprint, New York: University Books, 1970), 407, 418. Britten suggests republicanism as a heavenly improvement over democracy. Democracy is just too disorderly and noncentralized for federations of spirits, a clear symptom of the strengthening federalism in the aftermath of the Civil War.
- Paschal Beverly Randolph, *Dealings with the Dead: The Human Soul, Its Migrations and Its Transmigrations* (Utica, N.Y.: M. J. Randolph, 1861–1862), 9, 47–48.
- 42 Ibid., 42, 47–48. Randolph's father-publisher also appends her trance narrative with an advertisement for a mail-order treatment to cure masturbators. This snippet of textual history suggests the shared public arena of somatic and psychological discourses.
- 43 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 30.
- 44 Nettie Colburn Maynard, *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist? Or, Curious Revelations from the Life of a Trance Medium* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Rufus C. Hartranft, 1891), 90. Although this volume discusses Lincoln and his many contacts with the dead, it never speaks of Lincoln as dead. Omitted is his assassination, and the medium never suggests any attempts to communicate with the murdered president.
- 45 Ibid., 36, 200.

- 46 Mary Dana Shindler, *A Southerner among the Spirits: A Record of Investigations into the Spiritual Phenomena* (Memphis, Tenn.: Southern Baptist Publication Society, 1877), 106–7, 108. Although the difference between the medium's directions and the disembodied slave voice is dialectically marked, the two are interwoven in this passage. I've therefore taken to italicizing the medium's speech here and below to clarify the multiple voices in the passage (which, presumably, are the single creation of Shindler).
- 47 Ibid., 110.
- 48 Ibid., 106, 112. Shindler's planchette is a forerunner of the triangular-shaped stylus that comes in most boxes of the mass-produced Ouija game. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, author of *The Gates Ajar* (1868), a popular novel about a young woman's mourning for her brother killed on a Civil War battlefield, testified to the popularity of the planchette: "To-day a counter without Planchette is a fossil. . . . Planchette confronts you at dancing-parties and in the minister's study, in the drawing-room and the 'settin'-room'" ("Planchette," *Watchman and Reflector* 39 [3 September 1868].)
- 49 Phebe Thayer to Amy Post, quoted in Nancy A. Hewitt, "Amy Kirby Post," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* 37 (1984): 5.
- 50 Cottom, Abyss of Reason, 44.
- 51 Eliab Wilkinson Capron and Henry D. Barron, Singular Revelations: Explanation and History of the Mysterious Communion with Spirits, Comprehending the Rise and Progress of the Mysterious Noises in Western New-York, Generally Received as Spiritual Communications, 2d ed. (Auburn, N.Y.: Capron and Barron, 1850), 96.
- 52 Harriet Jacobs to Amy Post, in Jacobs, *Incidents*, 232. For more on Jacobs's situation in the Willis household, see Jean Fagan Yellin, "Written by Herself: Harriet Jacobs' Slave Narrative," *American Literature* 53 (1981): 480–81
- 53 Hiram Mattison, Spirit Rapping Unveiled! An Exposé of the Origin, History, Theology, and Philosophy of Certain Alleged Communications from the Spirit World by Means of "Spirit Rapping," "Medium Writing," "Physical Demonstrations," etc., with Illustrations (New York: Mason Brothers, 1853), 70.
- 54 "Communication from N. P. Rogers," *Liberator* 22, no. 51 (17 December 1852): 204.
- 55 Mattison, Spirit Rapping Unveiled! 104.
- 56 Hiram Mattison, Louisa Picquet, the Octoroon: A Tale of Southern Slave Life, in Collected Black Women's Narratives with an introduction by Anthony G. Barthelemy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 12, 16, 51. For a discussion of the inequities set up by Mattison's interviewing techniques, see Anthony G. Barthelemy, introduction to Collected Black Women's Narratives (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xxxix-xli..
- 57 Mattison, Louisa Picquet, 15.
- 58 Mattison, Louisa Picquet, 15, 48-49. Emphasis added. Mattison's compari-

son between a reader's white mother and Picquet's mother only goes so far. His care to specify "living" mothers indicates his continued disapproval of spiritualism and its tendency to sentimentalize dead mothers as guardian angels.

- 59 Frederick Douglass, *The Heroic Slave*, in *Three Classic African-American Novels*, ed. William L. Andrews (New York: Mentor, 1990), 66. The sailor is not the only "medium" who conveys Madison Washington's story of social death back to the realm of the politically living. Antislavery readers were first introduced to Washington by reading about Listwell hearing, but not seeing, the hounded slave express his desire for freedom. The fact that Madison remains visually, although not aurally, obscured to Listwell contributes to his disembodiment. He appears only as a voice rather than a body. Screened by the forest, Madison occupies not simply the position of the black lecturer on the abolitionist circuit, as critics have noted, but also the identity of a spirit who makes his nonpresence known by a medium's proxy.
- 60 Douglass, *The Heroic Slave*, 68. On the ideological contradictions of narrating black revolution within a tradition of white patriotism, see Russ Castronovo, *Fathering the Nation: American Genealogies of Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 219–28.
- 61 Douglass, The Heroic Slave, 68–69.
- 62 Ibid., 58.
- 63 Containment, expropriation, and reappropriation of the slave narrative occurs in several discursive contexts of the antebellum United States. For discussions of the ability of white textuality to adopt, reframe, and distort black expression, see Russ Castronovo, "Incidents in the Life of a White Woman: Economies of Race and Gender in the Antebellum Nation," *American Literary History* 10 (summer 1998): 239–65, and "Compromised Narratives along the Border: The Mason-Dixon Line, Resistance, and Hegemony," in *Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics*, ed. David Johnson and Scott Michaelsen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 195–220.
- 64 On Jacobs's residence in the Post's home and Amy Post's political activities, see Jean Fagan Yellin, introduction to *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, by Harriet A. Jacobs (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), xvi-xvii.
- 65 Braude, Radical Spirits, 57.
- 66 Harriet Jacobs to Amy Post and Isaac Post, 16 June 1861, quoted in Jacobs, *Incidents*, 248. Although Jacobs does not give Leah's last name, she is almost certainly talking about Leah Fish neé Fox, the elder sister of Kate and Margaret, who organized and managed the girls' public mediumship, and later claimed clairvoyant powers herself.

- 67 Isaac Post, Voices from the Spirit World, Being Communications from Many Spirits: By the Hand of Isaac Post, Medium (Rochester, N.Y.: Charles H. McDonnell, 1852), 36, 39.
- 68 On this point, see Dana D. Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 204.
- 69 Harriet Jacobs to Amy Post, in Jacobs, Incidents, 232.
- 70 Post, Voices from the Spirit World, 131, 132. To suggest such parallels between the history of Jacobs and the story of Sharp is not to ignore the fact that Isaac's spirit narrative is based on the historical events that befell a village girl named Sarah Sharp. For the sensationally rendered details of this story, see Dellon M. Dewey, The History of Charles Edwards and Sarah Sharp: Being an Authentic Account of the Horrible Penfield Tragedy, Which Took Place January 26, 1851, together with the Particulars of the Causes Which Led to It, Including the Coroner's Inquest, in Full (Rochester, N.Y.: D. M. Dewey, 1851). This history provides Isaac the content for his narrative of tragic female sexuality; in Jacobs's autobiography, he found a form and style for representing and omitting problematic scenes of female embodiment.
- 71 Valerie Smith, "Loopholes of Retreat": Architecture and Ideology in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: Meridian, 1990), 213.
- 72 Post, Voices from the Spirit World, 133.
- 73 Ibid., 132.
- 74 Ibid., 133.
- 75 See Teresa Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 131–35.
- 76 Post, Voices from the Spirit World, 132.
- 77 Stephanie A. Smith, *Conceived by Liberty: Maternal Figures and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 260.
- 78 Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 195, 190. As Brent contemplates resistance, she seems haunted by spirits, specifically those of her mother and father, in ways that suggest the tangibility of her historical memory. "In many an hour of tribulation I had seemed to hear her [her mother's] voice, sometimes chiding me, and sometimes whispering loving words" (Jacobs, *Incidents*, 90). Later, she hears her father's voice coming from Edenton's black graveyard.
- 79 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963), 55–56.

- 80 Thomas R. Gray, The Confessions of Nat Turner, in Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion, together with the Full Text of the So-called "Confessions" of Nat Turner Made in Prison in 1831, ed. Herbert Aptheker (New York: Humanities Press, 1966), 136.
- 81 John W. Edmonds and George T. Dexter, Spiritualism, with an Appendix by Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, 4th ed. (New York: Partridge and Brittan, 1853), 120–21.
- 82 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* (1850; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1983), 66.
- 83 Without revealing her physical form, she watches her son and daughter from above. "As the 'disembodied' matron who must literally watch her children from above, Brent ridicules Northern white metaphoric selfconstruction (abolitionists supposedly watch over the slaves) as 'maternal' saviors," writes Sandra Gunning ("Reading and Redemption," 147).
- 84 Mary E. Bradley, *Douglass Farm: A Juvenile Story of Life in Virginia* (Freeport, Maine: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 121, 182. The promise that souls can nurture from beyond the grave is an element in Phelps's *The Gates Ajar*, where a woman on her deathbed receives comfort in a morbid prediction: "You shall be just as much their mother, every day of their lives, as you have been here. Perhaps there is something to do for them which you never could have done here" (Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Gates Ajar* [1868; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964], 141).
- In addition to this furtive nighttime visitation to her daughter, Brent ex-85 plores the institutional specificity that produces socially dead motherhood. She bluntly reminds readers that hers is not a universal motherhood but a motherhood contingent on particular conditions: "O reader, can you imagine my joy? No, you cannot, unless you have been a slave mother" (173). Not merely a rebuke to the white women whose sympathetic identification Jacobs finds problematic, these words historicize the previously unhistorical. Motherhood, sympathy, and joy are not universals but are here modified by "slave" in ways that return readers to the specificity of Brent's body-a specificity they do not share. Her attitude makes it difficult to abstract Incidents so that it reads as the plot of Douglass Farm or "Communication from Sarah Sharp": the refusal to allow something as intangible as "joy" to function as a transhistorical, cross-cultural emotion challenges the disembodied identity produced by white subventions of African/American spiritual traditions.
- 86 Apophasis is a rhetorical device that denies an intention to speak of a subject which is at the same time specified or insinuated.

5 De-Naturalizing Citizenship

- I No matter how quirky, faddish, or popular, psychic, sexual, and antislavery discourses all unfold within a series of rituals, conventions, and constraints. Abolitionist rhetoric thus has its forms and formal expectations, and the séance has another set of expectations. So while such cultural practices and discourses may seem informal, especially in comparison to a constitutional amendment, they nonetheless abide forms, albeit different ones.
- 2 Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns, "Writing History and Registering Memory in Legal Decisions and Legal Practices: An Introduction," in *History, Memory, and the Law*, ed. Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 14.
- 3 Frances E. W. Harper, "Enlightened Motherhood: An Address by Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper before the Brooklyn Literary Society, November 15, 1892," in *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader*, ed. Frances Smith Foster (New York: Feminist Press, 1990), 285–86.
- 4 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes toward an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 149. For a different posthumanist critique of "free" subjects, see Michel Foucault's claim that "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" ("The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983], 221).
- 5 Harper, "Enlightened Motherhood," 285.
- 6 Frances E. W. Harper, "Could We Trace the Record of Every Human Heart," in *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader*, ed. Frances Foster Smith (New York: Feminist Press, 1990), 100. In this statement, Harper opposes a theory of natural rights to positive law. But even as she questions formal legal constructions as narrow, she does not dispense with a notion of formalism. The "law of God" is formal, though perhaps not in the same way as constitutional law, and for Harper it thus acts as a now-forgotten precedent to human legislation. The issue is not the formal versus the informal but rather which forms best guarantee her sense of "liberty."
- 7 Lauren Berlant, "The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Harriet Jacobs, Frances Harper, Anita Hill," *American Literature* 65 (September 1993): 553. Emphasis added.
- 8 See Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 9 Frances E. W. Harper, Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted, in The African-

American Novel in the Age of Reaction, ed. William L. Andrews (New York: Mentor, 1992), 212. For the remainder of this chapter, all further references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

- 10 Ira Berlin, "Who Freed the Slaves? Emancipation and Its Meaning," in Union and Emancipation: Essays on Politics and Race in the Civil War Era, ed. David W. Blight and Brooks D. Simpson (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997), 109.
- 11 This phrase from the Civil Rights Act of 1866 is quoted in Richard Bardolph, *The Civil Rights Record: Black Americans and the Law, 1849–1970* (New York: Crowell, 1970), 46.
- 12 Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (New York: Knopf, 1979), 253. In addition to Litwack on the Black Codes, see W. E. B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880 (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 167–79; and Raoul Berger, The Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 23. Joan Dayan discusses the "terminological slippage" in the Thirteenth Amendment that criminalized former slaves. This slippage remains very much in force, as Dayan contends, establishing a continuum between the slave's social death and prisoner's civil death in which due process does not apply. See Joan Dayan, "Held in the Body of the State: Prisons and the Law," in History, Memory, and the Law, ed. Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 227, 229.
- 13 These words from Thaddeus Stevens are quoted in Arnold J. Lien, Concurring Opinion: The Privileges or Immunities Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (St. Louis, Mo.: Washington University Studies, 1957), 47.
- William J. Brennan Jr., "Landmarks of Legal Liberty," in The Fourteenth 14 Amendment: Centennial Volume, ed. Bernard Schwartz (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 1. See also Herman Belz's reading of Reconstruction as a period in which "civil rights became nationalized" (Emancipation and Equal Rights: Politics and Constitutionalism in the Civil War Era [New York: W. W. Norton, 1978], 110). Eric Foner describes the broader political history of this consolidation of federal authority and expansion of national power in A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863–1877 (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 13, 105. For Robert J. Kaczorowiski, ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment represents nothing less than a constitutional revolution that brought citizenship and civil rights within the jurisdiction of Congress and the federal courts. Personal rights were no longer solely under the purview of the states after the extension of national government to matters of personhood ("To Begin the Nation Anew: Congress, Citizenship, and Civil Rights after the Civil War," American Historical Review 92 [February 1987]: 45-68). While legal scholars and historians have often pointed to the Fourteenth Amendment as legitimizing the consolidation of

federal over state power, the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery also made important steps in altering the relationship of the nation to the states. On this point, see Harold M. Hyman and William M. Wiecek, *Equal Justice under Law: Constitutional Development, 1835–1870* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 386–403.

- 15 On the unconditional aspects of rights, see Wai Chee Dimock, "Rethinking Space, Rethinking Rights: Literature, Law, Science," *Yale Journal of Law* and the Humanities 10 (summer 1998): 487–502; and Slavoj Žižek, "Formal Democracy and Its Discontents: Violations of the Fantasy-Space," *Ameri*can Imago 48 (1991): 181–98.
- 16 Hyman and Wiecek, Equal Justice, 415. For an overview that touches on naturalization's connections to Jim Crow and the status of African Americans, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 223–45.
- 17 Yet the "natural" process of conception and birth can be interrupted with measures that many persons cast as "unnatural," as contravening yet-stillhigher laws and capacious ideologies of morality, ethics, and religion. The metaphor that compares the naturalization of citizenship to the naturalness of birth becomes an issue in light of judicial, political, and social debates provoked by decisions such as *Roe v. Wade* and *Griswold v. Connecticut* (see below) that recognize birth as no longer inevitable. It is no coincidence that Supreme Court arguments involving contraception and abortion — that is, legal acknowledgments that birth is not inevitable — make strong appeal to the Fourteenth Amendment as a foundational precedent.
- 18 Daniel Farber and John E. Meunch, "The Ideological Origins of the Fourteenth Amendment," *Constitutional Commentary* 1 (1984): 276.
- 19 Žižek, "Formal Democracy," 190.
- 20 The language of this draft is quoted in Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 301.
- 21 Robert Dale Owen, *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World, with Narrative Illustrations* (1859; reprint, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1875), 118.
- 22 Critical legal studies address this concern by arguing that the rhetoric of rights, despite critiques that point to the constructedness or instability of this rhetoric, still matters a great deal to those who are systematically denied rights. As Patricia J. Williams states, "Rights rhetoric has been and continues to be an effective form of discourse for blacks. The vocabulary of rights speaks to an establishment that values the guise of stability, and from whom social change for the better must come (whether it is given, taken, or smuggled). Change argued for in the sheep's clothing of stability ("rights") can be effective, even as it destabilizes certain other establishment values (segregation). The subtlety of rights' real instability thus does not render unusable their persona of stability" (*The Alchemy of Race and*

Rights [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991], 149). In light of such concerns, Joan Dayan is attentive to the risks of critically interrogating rights when the protections of citizenship are still withheld from so many persons, particularly African American men in prison; see her "Held in the Body of the State," 230–31.

- 23 Brook Thomas, "*China Men, United States v. Wong Kim Ark,* and the Question of Citizenship," *American Quarterly* 50 (December 1998): 694.
- 24 Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism,'" in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 16. Bonnie Honig writes, "I argue that even foundationally secured foundations are always imperfect, fissured, or incomplete and that these imperfections are the spaces of politics, the spaces from which to resist and engage the would-be perfect closures of god, self-evidence, law, identity, or community" (*Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993], 9).
- 25 Saidiya V. Hartman, Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 118.
- 26 James Lynch, "Let the Word African Be Stricken from the Discipline of the Church," *Christian Recorder*, 25 March 1865. Leon F. Litwack (*Been in the Storm So Long*, 540) has been instrumental in drawing my attention to this and other sources from the *Christian Recorder* that concern debates over African American national identity.
- 27 George A. Rue, Christian Recorder, 8 April 1865.
- 28 "The American Negro," *Christian Recorder*, 21 November 1868. The rhetoric of this editorial echoes Stowe's confusion over the issue of blacks and nationalism. Fugitive slave and black patriot George Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* speaks of his soul's "yearning... for an African *nationality*," but refuses to consider Haiti as an alternative geography: "The race that formed the character of the Haytiens was a worn-out, effeminate one; and, of course, the subject race will be centuries in rising to anything" (Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* [1852; reprint, New York: Penguin, 1981], 608–9).
- 29 Booker T. Washington, Up from Slavery, in Three Negro Classics, with an introduction by John Hope Franklin (New York: Avon, 1965), 94; and W. E. B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk, in Three Negro Classics (New York: Avon, 1965), 241.
- 30 For one treatment of "a community not exhausted by citizenship," see Qadri Ismail, "Batting against the Break: On Cricket, Nationalism, and the Swashbuckling Sri Lankans," *Social Text* 50 (spring 1997): 47.
- 31 Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 104, 110. Just as military patriotism, in the minds of many lawmakers, proved blacks worthy of citizenship, a soldier's

dereliction of duty resulted in a forfeiture of citizenship. On the same day that Congress approved the Freedmen's Bureau, it also passed a denationalization statute that stripped deserters of civic rights. This convergence suggests the importance of a nationally proven manhood in securing political incorporation. See Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 298.

- 32 Frances E. W. Harper, *Trial and Triumph*, in *Minnie's Sacrifice*, *Sowing and Reaping, Trial and Triumph: Three Rediscovered Novels by Frances E. W. Harper*, ed. Frances Smith Foster (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 222.
- 33 The intertwining of the general's sympathy and potentially lurid erotic interest in Iola repeats the earlier history in this novel of a young slave owner's liberal fascination with Iola's mother: "I thought of this beautiful and defenceless girl adrift in the power of a reckless man, who, with all the advantages of wealth and education, had trailed his manhood in the dust" (54). After this proclamation, the slave owner takes steps to educate and refine his slave so that she can become his wife, who unrecognized by law, exists as his concubine. For Iola, then, postbellum history comes problematically close to reenacting antebellum history as each episode locates male sentimentality at the origins of sexual interest and possessiveness.
- 34 Tate, Domestic Allegories, 99.
- 35 Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 238.
- 36 It is worth noting that Iola resists the doctor's sexual fantasy as well as his nationalist plea to protect her with paternalistic love. After Gresham rails against the "men by whom you were tried and tempted," Iola tersely corrects him: "Tried but not tempted" (88). His investment in U.S. nationalism coincides with his belief that enforced sexual privacy is alluring to Iola. Privacy is thus never beyond the pale of the state. For more on this point, see Phillip Brian Harper, who reads *Iola Leroy* as an instance "in which the supposedly free and unconstrained private realm wherein people choose with whom they will interact socially has been regulated either by the state or some other entity external to the private sphere" ("Private Affairs: Race, Sex, Property, and Persons," *GLQ* I (1994): 120.
- 37 The social contract is built on a complex of repression, and Carole Pateman describes its sexual workings as "a repressed dimension of contract theory" (*The Sexual Contract* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988], ix). I am modifying Pateman's thesis to show how it is a *white* "man who makes use of woman's body (sexual property)" (185).
- 38 Ibid., 2. In fact, as James Kettner demonstrates, the uncertain legal status of freepersons and later freedpersons as neither naturalizable nor consenting

to citizenship necessitated contractual definitions of the relation between self and state (*The Development of American Citizenship*, *1608–1870* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978], 287–351).

- 39 Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 240. And on the importance of marriage as a confirmation of civil rights for freed slaves, see Tate, *Domestic Allegories*, 71, 90–92.
- 40 Tate, *Domestic Allegories*, 90, 125.
- And according to Saidiya V. Hartman and Kevin K. Gaines, the cost of 4I upholding privacy is immense where political and civic freedom are concerned. Both these critics implicitly contend with Tate's thesis that domestic allegories of bourgeois private life have emancipatory significance. The "articulation of black politics at the site of the family is often consistent with the regulatory effects of the state," argues Hartman (Scenes of Subjection, 157). She explains that under the jurisdiction of spheres identified as private, emphasis on the social displaces civil rights with the result that claims for political freedom lose their urgency (199–200). Likewise, Gaines sees that "preoccupation with the status of the patriarchal family among blacks" confuses bourgeois advancement with political progress (Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996], 6). While I acknowledge the force of these assertions (see, for instance, my earlier reading of The Blithedale Romance), Harper nonetheless refuses to ignore the paramount importance of family in national rhetoric. For her, the domestic functions both as a site of interpellation and critique because the U.S. nation-state so heavily depends on the image of nation as family.
- 42 Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*, in *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*, trans. Richard Dixon et al. (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 3:77.
- 43 Not that Iola, in her identity as daughter (or slave daughter), isn't already living in accordance with patriarchal law. As a prospective wife, however, she enjoys the illusion of consent, symbolized by the acceptance of a husband. It is only as a "white" daughter that Iola doesn't feel the force of this law as keenly as when she is legally redefined as merchandise.
- 44 David Brewer, *American Citizenship: Yale Lectures* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 3.
- 45 Griswold v Connecticut, 381 US 479 (1965). Given that the attorneys for Griswold did not draw attention to the fact that the Planned Parenthood clinic in question was open to single as well as married women, it is important to remember that the Court's ruling protected only marital privacy; on this point, see Hugh C. Macgill, "Introduction: Observations on Teaching Griswold," Connecticut Law Review 23 (summer 1991): 858 n. 10. In Eisenstadt v. Baird, the Court was not swayed by arguments that ac-

cess to contraception should be denied to unmarried persons. Again, in this case, the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause was cited as the ground for "fundamental human rights" including privacy (*Eisenstadt v Baird*, 405 US 438 [1972]).

- 46 Connecticut's argument is quoted in Macgill, "Introduction," 859.
- 47 See, for instance, Jean L. Cohen, "Democracy, Difference, and the Right of Privacy," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 187–217.
- 48 Robert H. Bork, *The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law* (New York: Touchstone, 1990), 114. Given Bork's emphasis on "tempting," there is the implication that the Constitution has asked for this violation—just as Gresham assumes that Iola at some deeper level has asked for abasement when he speaks of "the men by whom you were tried and tempted" (88).
- 49 Elizabeth M. Schneider, "The Violence of Privacy," *Connecticut Law Review* (summer 1991): 974.
- 50 Brewer, *American Citizenship*, 19. In its ability to completely cover up subjectivity, nationalism/marriage graces the citizen with a prosthetic identity that protects him or her from political injury. But, as the case of the daughter of the Riccarees showed in chapter 1, a prosthesis often poorly fits subjects whose history exceeds the limits and forms of state identity.
- 51 Charles Wallace Collins, *The Fourteenth Amendment and the States: A Study* of the Operation of the Restraint Clauses of Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (Boston: Little, Brown, 1912), 34, 63, 10.
- 52 Chantal Mouffe, "Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community," in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1992), 227.
- 53 Tate, Domestic Allegories, 91.
- 54 Judith N. Shklar, American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 52. For a reading of Iola Leroy that counters Shklar's account of the freedpeople's goals, see John Ernest on the effort "to locate a specifically African-American mode of understanding" (Resistance and Reformation in Nineteenth-Century African-American Literature: Brown, Wilson, Jacobs, Delany, Douglass, and Harper [Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1995], 184).
- 55 Her brother, Harry, similarly sets up federal incorporation as ancillary to his desire to reintegrate his family. He enlists in the Union army "not so much for the sake of fighting for the Government, as with the hope of finding my mother and sister, and avenging their wrongs" (96).
- 56 Harper, Trial and Triumph, 260, 184. This reference to "womanhood in the

dust" anticipates her description of Iola's father, who "had trailed his manhood in the dust" (54). But the switch from "womanhood" to "manhood" does more than indict patriarchal institutions. For insofar as white masculinity was connected to slaveholding, this change takes what had been a privatized history in *Trial and Triumph* and converts it into a matter of national crisis.

- ⁵⁷ "The citizen herself" is indeed an uneasy formulation. Yet for an authority no less than Chief Justice Taney, white women's citizenship would imply no contradictions since "discrimination per se did not exclude women, minors, and other whites from citizenship" (Kettner, *Development of American Citizenship*, 327). The problem, then, is that the citizen herself in Iola's case can trace African origins.
- 58 Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 247. Litwack supplies evidence that the refashioning of names and identities provided access to certain governmental entitlements: "Whether to enlist in the Union Army, live in the contraband camps, apply for relief at the Freedmen's Bureau office, or, some years later, vote in an election, blacks needed to register both a given name and a surname with Federal authorities" (248).
- 59 Brewer, American Citizenship, 39.
- 60 Quoted in Lien, Concurring Opinion, 72.
- 61 James Kettner discusses the rationale and history behind *Dred Scott (Development of American Citizenship*, 324–27). Among the issues the case hinged on was the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise that gave Congress federal power over slavery in the territories.
- 62 Brook Thomas, *Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford, 1997), 19.
- 63 Lien, *Concurring Opinion*, 74. Herman Belz sets the idea of dual citizenship in the context of the 1866 Civil Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment *(Emancipation*, 119–20). Justice Miller's opinion, as Belz explains, intensified the separateness of state and national citizenship by construing the two identities "as separate and exclusive rather than complementary and concentric" (131). *The Slaughter-House Cases* was one in a series of decisions handed down by the Court that effectively undermined black civil rights. In *United States v. Cruikshank* (1875), the justices determined that individuals could not appeal to the federal government for protection against the invasion of their rights by private parties. Eight years later in *The Civil Rights Cases* (1883), the court deemed the 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional.
- 64 James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, "Cities and Citizenship," *Public Culture* 8 (1996): 198.
- 65 Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), 6. On the need to keep in

mind the tenacity of the state's underwriting of citizenship, see also Nira Yuval-Davis, "The Citizenship Debate: Women, Ethnic Processes, and the State," *Feminist Review* 39 (winter 1991): 63.

- 66 Partha Chatterjee, "Beyond the Nation? Or Within?" *Social Text* 56 (fall 1998): 68.
- 67 On the allusive quality of the names Harper uses in *Iola Leroy*, see Elizabeth Ammons, *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 29; and Melba Joyce Boyd, *Discarded Legacy: Politics and Poetics in the Life of Frances E. W. Harper, 1825–1911* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 190.
- 68 Hazel V. Carby, Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 97. Critics have claimed that Iola Leroy and Harper herself were popular precisely because of this pedagogical mission. See Ammons, Conflicting Stories, 21–22; and Frances Smith Foster, introduction to Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xxvii, and introduction to Minnie's Sacrifice, Sowing and Reaping, Trial and Triumph: Three Rediscovered Novels by Frances E. W. Harper, by Frances E. W. Harper (Boston: Beacon, 1994), xiii–xxv. Foster writes that Harper's "reputation was so great and she was so admired that women from Pittsburgh to St. Louis, and St. Paul, formed F. E. W. Harper Leagues" (introduction to Minnie's Sacrifice, xiv).
- 69 My thinking on public/private spheres in *Iola Leroy* is informed by Carla L. Peterson, "Further Liftings of the Veil": Gender, Class, and Labor in Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy*," in *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism*, ed. Elaine Hedges and Shelly Fisher Fishkin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 101; and Cathy N. Davidson, "Preface: No More Separate Spheres!" *American Literature* 70 (September 1998): 443–63.
- 70 Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 15.
- 71 Peterson, "Further Liftings of the Veil," 110.
- 72 For interpretations of *Iola Leroy* as subversive and resistant, see Ernest, *Resistance and Reformation*, 180–207; Boyd, *Discarded Legacy*, 196; and Marylynne Diggs, "Surveying the Intersection: Pathology, Secrecy, and the Discourses of Racial and Sexual Identity," in *Critical Essays: Gay and Lesbian Writers of Color*, ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson (New York: Haworth Press, 1993), 9. For interpretations of the novel as a repository of conservative social values, see Barbara Christian, "Shadows Uplifted," in *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class, and Race in Literature and Culture*, ed. Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt (New York: Methuen, 1985), 206;

and Vashti Lewis, "The Near-White Female in Frances Ellen Harper's *Iola Leroy*," *Phylon* 45 (1984): 320.

- 73 Diggs, "Surveying the Intersection," 9.
- 74 Berlant, "The Queen of America," 562.
- 75 Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *The Phantom Public Sphere*, ed. Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 15. Jürgen Habermas also revised his account of the public sphere to admit "the coexistence of competing public spheres" ("Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 425.
- 76 Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, "Contract versus Charity: Why Is There No Social Citizenship in the United States?" in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 116; and T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (1946; reprint, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 9. Providing a genealogical account that echoes Marx's story in "The Jewish Question" of a prebourgeois state that does not sever political from civil rights, Marshall assesses how citizenship, under modern capitalism, abandons commitments to social rights. See also Jeffrey Goldfarb, who links this antidemocratic tendency within counterpublics to the uncertain role of the public intellectual (*Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society* [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 17).
- Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class, 33. See also J. M. Barbalet, Citizen-77 ship: Rights, Struggle, and Class Inequality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Barbalet's observation, following Marshall, that citizenship upholds a capitalist foundation and its attendant inequalities is borne out by the Supreme Court's overwhelming tendency to rule on the "due process" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as concerning not the rights of African Americans but those of corporations (8, 27). As Brook Thomas reports, "By 1911, the Supreme Court had heard 607 Fourteenth Amendment cases. Three hundred and twelve involved corporations; thirty involved issues relating to the rights of African Americans" (Plessy v. Ferguson, 21). Although a "corporation is not born or naturalized and is not a citizen of the United States," it proved easier to conceive of nonphysical, invulnerable bodies as having rights than to litigate in favor of federal protection for racial bodies (Owen J. Roberts, The Court and the Constitution: The Oliver Wendell Holmes Lectures, 1951 [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951], 68).
- 78 Ammons, *Conflicting Stories*, 27. For a similar point about the impact of Harper's political agenda on her aesthetic choices, see Deborah McDowell, who suggests that Harper's thematization of a "collective mission" demands

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the sacrifice of Iola's psychological development to stiff representations of characters across a socioeconomic spectrum ("'The Changing Same': Generational Connections and Black Women Novelists," *New Literary History* 18 [winter 1987]: 286).

79 In her poetry, Harper's speakers do not become discouraged about the struggle of acquiring literacy. In "Learning to Read" (in Frances E. W. Harper, *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader*, ed. Frances Smith Foster [New York: Feminist Press, 1990], 206), one of several poems about Aunt Chloe, an early version of Aunt Linda, the speaker says,

> And, I longed to read my Bible, For precious words it said But when I begun to learn it, Folks just shook their heads,

And said there is no use trying, Oh! Chloe, you're too late; But as I was rising sixty, I had no time to wait.

Carla L. Peterson helps account for the difference between Linda and Chloe by suggesting that the form of fiction itself led Harper to mediate a working-class presence and objectify a "black subaltern subjectivity" ("Further Liftings of the Veil," 104). Aunt Linda's ultimate rejection of literacy also may be consistent with larger cultural narratives of folk/racial authenticity. The postbellum juvenile novel *Plantation Jim* repeatedly overidentifies reading with whiteness. A literate mulatto is viewed "as one belonging wholly to another race," and Jim's most intense desire is to "learn to be like white folks" (Zacariah Mudge, *Plantation Jim, and the Freedom Which He Obtained* [New York: Hurst, n.d.], 27, 44).

- 80 Kevin K. Gaines, Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 6.
- 81 Frances E. W. Harper, Minnie's Sacrifice, in Minnie's Sacrifice, Sowing and Reaping, Trial and Triumph: Three Rediscovered Novels by Frances E. W. Harper, ed. Frances Smith Foster (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 76.
- 82 Ibid., 77. The similar passage from *Iola Leroy* reads, "It was a strange sight to see these black men rallying around the Stars and Stripes, when white men were trampling them under foot and riddling them with bullets" (29).
- 83 For example, she writes, "The disaster of Bull Run had been retrieved. Sherman had made his famous march to the sea. Fighting Joe Hooker had scaled the stronghold of the storm king and won a victory in the palace chamber

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of the clouds; the Union soldiers had captured Columbia, replanted the Stars and Stripes in Charleston, and changed that old sepulchre of slavery into the cradle of a new-born freedom. Farragut had been as triumphant on water as the other generals had on land, and New Orleans had been wrenched from the hands of the Confederacy" (104). Harper condenses the history of the Civil War into a series of declarative sentences that restore the nation and place it beyond ambiguity or doubt. Her use of the past perfect makes that nation an already completed and thus uncontested form. Elizabeth Young also reads *Iola Leroy* as a Civil War fiction, but one that is freighted with a maternal quest ("Warring Fictions: *Iola Leroy* and the Color of Gender," *American Literature* 64 [1992]: 273–97).

- 84 For more on the idea of dis-corporation, see Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), 50; and Russ Castronovo, "Nation dot com: American Studies and the Production of the Corporatist Citizen," in *The Futures of American Studies*, ed. Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman (forthcoming).
- 85 Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 139.
- 86 And yet the search for intimate, meaningful contact with the political is no easy task. *The Souls of Black Folk* hints at the hurdles complicating this democratic impulse when Du Bois urges the necessity of "intimate contact with the masses" (302). The self-contradictory nature of this phrase that assumes the possibility of a nongeneralized understanding of a general social entity indicates the structural barriers to realizing an alternative species being of citizenship.

To understand how miscegenation without sex appears as a viable political alternative, it is important to see how Democratic congressmen linked civil rights to the horror of "amalgamation." Urging President Johnson to veto the 1866 Civil Rights Act, Frank Blair wrote: "No man can advocate an amalgamation of the white & black races and so create a mongrel nation" (quoted in LaWanda Cox, "Civil Rights: The Issue of Reconstruction," in *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction: Collected Writings of LaWanda Cox,* ed. Donald G. Nieman [Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997], 94).

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I Blyew v United States, 80 US 581, 583 (1871). This case set an important precedent for the drastic scuttling of the Civil Rights Act two years later in the Slaughter-House Cases examined in the previous chapter. On the trajectory from Blyew to Slaughter-House, see Harold M. Hyman and William M. Wiecek, Equal Justice under Law: Constitutional Development, 1835–1870 (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 434–38.

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- 2 *Blyew*, 594. More recently, civil rights issues have been invoked to bring justice to the dead or socially powerless. A jury, for instance, found that white Los Angeles police officers had violated Rodney King's rights in a 1991 beating that left him unconscious. In a different case that also involved race, two white autoworkers were prosecuted for violating Vincent Chin's civil rights when they beat him so severely with a baseball bat that he died four days later. After a county court trial in which the men plead guilty to manslaughter and had their sentences reduced to three-years probation plus a small fine, Chin's mother and other advocates agitated to bring the case to federal court, invoking civil rights issues. This time, one of the defendants was convicted and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison. The verdict, however, was overturned in 1986 in a federal appeals court. Chin's mother has since left the United States, having returned to her native village in China.
- 3 Blyew, 585-86. Emphasis added.
- 4 *Blyew*, 589. These U.S. attorneys argued against a narrow interpretation of freedom by citing both the Thirteenth Amendment and 1866 Civil Rights Act as expansive legislation that prohibited such limitations on African American rights as established by Kentucky's black code.

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